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The Fernando Gems

-:- Or, -:-

Thru Mexican Perils

By Will Lisenbee

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PART I.

I STOOD just outside the door, listening. The great castle-like house was as silent as the grave. I was positive I had heard the sound of a human voice. The hall was black as a cave, and as I listened for a repetition of the sound the beating of my own heart thundered like the roll of a drum.

What had become of the girl whose face I had seen at the window? Was it her voice I had heard? I tried to think coherently. If I could only be sure of what had become of the dwarf——

Was it a step I heard coming from the room I had just left? It might be Nemo, the dwarf, or——

I flung the door open and entered the room. The candle I had left burning had gone out! I groped my way toward the table, and at the same instant I heard the door which I had left ajar slam behind me! Some one had entered the room in my absence and had extinguished the candle, and had now shut the door, shutting me in the darkness.

Instinctively I felt that it was the work of the dwarf. Had he shut me in from the outside, or was he lurking near ready to throw himself upon me? I stopped abruptly and stood listening. A faint sliding sound came from the direction of the door, and this was followed by a quick breathing like the panting of a dog!

I felt a vague chill of indescribable terror come over me! I have never been reckoned as a coward, but there was something in the situation, the palpitating darkness, the stealthy sound that might come from one whose hand was bent on murder—the uncanny Thing that I could not see—all these things conspired to fill me with a nameless fear that I could not shake off.

While I stood silent, listening, my heart beating tumultuously, a thousand fancies beset my brain. I could picture the dwarf, hideous-visaged, a cunning leer on his evil face, working his way silently toward me in the darkness. I did not move. I realized that a step, or to make the slightest sound, would be to guide my unknown foe in his silent search for me.

As this thought came to me I felt convinced that my foe was employing the same strategy, for there was no further sound of step or breathing. And all the time he might be waiting for me to make some move that would betray me.

It was not a pleasant situation. To play a game of hide and seek in a dark room with one who might be waiting for a chance to murder you is a situation to get onto one's nerves. The suspense of it, the elements of uncertainty, the black, enshrouding darkness, held me as in a grip of steel.

The dreadful silence weighed upon me, and I felt an almost ungovernable impulse to rush upon the silent, menacing Thing that I knew must be somewhere between me and the door. But I could not be certain that such an attempt would not be to expose myself to an attack without availing me anything. I kept silent, and listening as I had never listened before, I stood immovable.

Presently I caught a faint sound—something like the cautious intake of breath, and the sound came from my left. Still I waited, hoping for a repetition of the sound that I might be better guided in my attack.

Every moment seemed like an age. I could count my own heartbeats as I waited and listened. And now I heard a faint sound; it was as if a foot had been placed upon the floor with infinite caution, yet the sound had reached me. It was not two yards from me, on my left. I decided to wait no longer, for at any moment I might feel the thrust of a knife or the crash of a bullet thru my body.

I swung around like a flash, and stooping, lunged with outstretched hands toward the spot where I believed the dwarf to be crouching, ready to spring upon me.

I heard a rasping sound, a quick step, and then my hands came in contact with a burly body. I struck out with my right, a blow that must have felled my adversary, but it did not land properly, and the next moment I was struggling in the grasp of my unseen foe.

I was now fully convinced that my mysterious adversary was Nemo, the dwarf, and realizing that I should find him a most formidable foe, I exerted all my strength to force him backward, at the same time tripping him by a swift maneuver that I had learned at college.

He staggered, and we both went down together. As we fell I heard the clink of metal falling upon the floor, and with my disengaged hand I reached out quickly. My fingers came in contact with the handle of a knife, and I clutched it.

I think the dwarf must have struck his head against the wall as we went down, for his hold on me relaxed for an instant, and taking advantage of it, I slipped clear of him and was on my feet in an instant. I still held the knife ready to defend myself, for tho I realized that my life might depend on it, I could not bring myself to use the deadly weapon on my fallen antagonist.

At least I was provided with a weapon of defense, and I now felt that I should be a match for the dwarf—if it really were the dwarf—if he should renew the attack.

I now resolved upon a move that I had not before considered. I would strike a light and have a look at my mysterious foe! It would be much preferable to fighting in the dark, if fight I must.

With a quick movement I leaped to the other side of the room, drew a match from my pocket and lit it. I held it above my head as the flame dispelled the darkness, and swiftly I swept the room with my gaze. My mysterious antagonist had disappeared!

I stood staring about the room in amazement. The door was still closed, but I was the only living soul in the room! What had become of my mysterious visitor?

The question staggered me. There was something inexplicably strange about the whole affair—something decidedly uncanny. But for my personal encounter with the Thing itself, and the ugly-looking knife which I held in my hand, I should have suspected that I had been tricked by an excited fancy.

I picked up the candle from the table and lighted it. Then I made a careful inspection of the room. Windows and doors were all closed, and there was no way by which the midnight intruder could have effected an exit without passing thru one of the doors or windows, and yet had this been done I must have heard the opening and closing of the shutter or the door. But I had heard nothing!

I will not deny that the queer affair gave me a creepy feeling, and after taking a turn about the room, with the lighted candle, I returned to the library, bolting the door behind me.

Then I sat down and tried to think calmly over my situation. It seemed that I had come on a fool's errand, after all; that my visit to the Pandraza Castle was to bear only the fruits of adventure, mystery and peril!

Why had I accepted the commission to come to Mexico—into the wilds of Guerrero—to bring from the castle of Pandraza the Fernando jewels? Had not Don Eugenio Fernando told me that I would be compelled to face the deadliest peril? Yet I had come; not for the sake of the reward I was to receive—tho that might have tempted better men than myself—for be it known that I, Henry Litchfield, 21 years old, was only a cub reporter on a New Orleans daily, with no income except that which came from my work on the paper. Yet I may say that it was not the reward that tempted me to brave the dangers, but a morbid desire for adventure, and yes—there was a woman in the case—a girl whom I had never seen and might never see—a girl whose sweet oval face with a pair of great dark eyes had looked at me from the gold locket that fell from Don Eugenio Fernando's pocket the night I rescued him from the vengeful hand of an assassin in the streets of New Orleans.

What folly was it that kept that face before me even in my dreams? What answer shall I make, except to say that it was that universal folly that has, since the days of the Garden of Eden, made the world go round?

"That is the picture of Felipa Estrada, a relative of my deceased uncle," Don Eugenio had told me as we sat in his room at the hotel the next day after our adventure, "an angel with a demon for a father—Don Perrigo Estrada—the man whose hired assassin followed me from Mexico and tried to murder me last night."

It was two weeks later that he told me the story of the Fernando jewels.

"Don Benito Fernando, my great-uncle," he began, "was the owner of a vast estate in Guerrero, and among his possessions was a rare collection of jewels and precious stones which he had brought with him from Spain.

"When he died a few months ago he left his collection of jewels to Felipa and myself, all of his other estate going to his nearer relatives. Before he died I was called from my plantation in Cuba to his bedside, where I remained till the end. Just before he passed away he had the jewels brought to me, and dividing them into two parcels, each parcel being placed in an ebony case, he gave them into my possession, asking me to carry the one intended for Felipa to her, as she was not present.

"After the burial of Don Benito I set out for the home of Felipa, who lived with her father in the old ruin of a castle of Pandraza, to deliver to her the jewels left by my greatuncle. But on my arrival at the castle I was met by a great surprise. As good fortune would have it, I met Felipa in the grounds, and she hastily informed me that her father had joined the revolutionists, and at the head of a plundering band was sacking the little towns and creating a reign of terror thruout the State of Guerrero. She told me that it was not safe for my presence to be known at the castle, as I would doubtless be looked upon as a spy, and conducting me into the castle, she led me to one of her own rooms, where we would be free from intrusion and where we could talk the situation over.

"When I told her of the jewels I had brought she told me that my life would not be safe for a moment if it was known that I had them, and she begged me, for my own safety, to leave as soon as night should come and take both cases of jewels with me. She had grown to fear her father of late, his treatment of her had been so brutal, and she was convinced that, should he discover that the jewels had been left to her, he would seize them at once and appropriate them to his own use, or worse, lose them at the gambling table. While we were discussing the subject there came a sudden knocking at the door and the voice of Felipa's father demanding admittance. Felipa opened the door and Don Estrada entered. 'I have just overheard your most interesting conversation,' he said mockingly, without giving me any greeting, 'and I shall trouble you to give me those jewels!'

"My anger rose. He had never liked me, and I never had any reason even to respect him, tho we had never had any hard words.

"'What do you mean?' I asked. Without answering he made a lunge at me. I saw the gleam of a knife and knew my danger. With a quick maneuver I dodged and dealt him a heavy blow. He went down limp and senseless at my feet. Felipa screamed and would have fallen in a faint had I not supported her. She stood leaning against the wall white and trembling. I picked up the knife that had fallen from her father's hand and gave it to the girl. 'You must go at once!' she urged. 'Father has been drinking, and oh—I am so afraid he will do something dreadful!'

"'I will go,' I told her, 'and immediately, unless you need my protection?

"'Go! He would kill us both if you stayed!' she quavered. 'When he is sober I shall not fear him. Take all the jewels and keep mine till you hear from me.'

"The don was showing signs of recovery, and then Felipa pressed my hand, and with a 'God bless you!' turned and bent over her father, while I left the room, closing the door behind me.

"But I found the place swarming with Don Estrada's men, and as I left the house and paused in some shrubbery, I began to realize that my chances of escape were slim indeed. Near me was an ancient sundial made of stone, and tilting it to one side, I hastily scooped out a small cavity in the ground beneath it and placed the cases of jewels therein. Then I slipped thru the grounds toward the gate. But I had to fight my way, and it was only by God's mercy I was not captured by the brutal, ragged insurrectionists, who swarmed after me. And how I subsequently escaped them, and how I managed to get safely out of Mexico, is too long a story to tell. But the jewels I placed under the pedestal of the old sundial are still there, if they have not been found and carried away by Don Estrada or some of his men. But I have confidence that they have not been found. That they may be found is possible, and for that reason I want to send some one to bring them away as soon as possible. I dare not return to Mexico, for I have learned that charges have been made against me by Don Estrada, accusing me of being in conspiracy with the forces of the lately deposed President."

I shall not go into the details of my conference with Don Fernando, but will let it suffice to say that I left for Mexico two weeks later, commissioned to go to the castle of Pandraza in Guerrero and bring the jewels to New Orleans. For my services I was to receive $2,000 if successful, and $500 and the payment of all expenses in case the jewels were not found in the place where they had been left.

I carried with me letters from the Mexican ambassador that would give me safe passage thru Mexican territory, and I had little trouble in reaching San Rego, the little village lying close to Pandraza castle.

That very night, having hired a guide to accompany me, I set out for the castle. The bribe I had given the Mexican made him my willing slave, and I think the faithful Pedro would have murdered any one who sought to molest me.

It was not my aim to present myself at the castle until I had secured the jewels and removed them from the premises, tho I had made up my mind to see Felipa Estrada at all hazards. It was a mad thing to do under the circumstances, but the hope of seeing her was no small part of the reward I hoped to gain by my dangerous mission.

It was an hour after dark when we reached the broken wall that surrounds the castle. Here we halted in a thicket of shrubbery to reconnoiter.

From reports I had received I did not think Don Estrada was at the castle, but I did not propose to take any chances. I had made a careful study of a map of the grounds given me by Don Fernando, and I was confident of my ability to find the sundial where the jewels were hidden without any trouble.

After assuring myself that no one was lurking in the grounds, I turned to Pedro, and bidding him wait for me and not to venture from his place unless I should summon him to my assistance, I slipped thru the broken wall and entered the grounds. I advanced a few steps and then stopped in the shadow of a tree for a moment to make doubly sure that my entrance had not been discovered by any one.

The sky was partly overcast with clouds, but at intervals the full moon came out and cast a flood of light over the scene. The old ruin of a castle stood dark and grim against the sky, and only a solitary light gleamed from its somber walls.

While the light from the moon dispelled the darkness I took a quick survey of the grounds and then walked in the direction of the spot where, as I believed, I would find the sundial. I came upon it suddenly as I pushed my way thru a mass of tangled weeds, and for a moment I stood staring before me stupefied, stunned! The pedestal of the sundial lay on its side and the cavity beneath where the jewels had rested was empty!

I was dizzy with a crushing sense of my defeat. I stood gazing at the overturned sundial, a gripping sense of my failure weighing upon me. My mission had failed! The truth of it was before me. I might as well turn my back on the evidence of my defeat and return to New Orleans, go back to my position as cub reporter, carrying with me only the memory of my failure.

It was a bitter thought. I tried to think coherently of it all. No, I would not give up; I would not admit defeat till I had made a desperate effort to accomplish my mission.

I was not long in deciding on a course of action. I would see Felipa if possible and be advised by her. But how was this to be accomplished? To be caught prowling about the premises might result in my being caught and thrown into prison. However, I must take the chance.

Returning to the spot where I had left Pedro, I told him to remain outside the walls in hiding till I should either return or signal for him to join me.

The fact that I spoke the Mexican Spanish fairly well was due to the kindness of a Mexican herder who had been employed on my father's ranch for three years, and who had exerted himself to teach me his language, while I imparted to him a knowledge of English. Francisco DeLeon and I became warm friends, and it was with a feeling of regret that I told him good-by when he left the ranch to return to Mexico.

My knowledge of his language now stood me in good stead, for it is a well-known fact that any American who speaks the Spanish language finds a more ready welcome among the people of Mexico than he could hope for without such knowledge.

Leaving Pedro ensconced behind the clump of bushes near the wall, I again entered the grounds and made my way toward the gloomy building from which winked a single light like a Cyclopean eye.

There was no living soul to be seen and no sign of life excepting the solitary ray of light streaming from the window in an upper story.

I stopped a little distance from the building, and from the shadow of a tree, I made a careful inspection of my surroundings and the gloomy old ruin, the north wing of which was fallen down in many places and covered with creeping vines.

I had no fear of any one who might be about the place excepting Don Estrada, and now the deserted appearance of the old building convinced me that he was not there.

I remained but a few moments at my post of observation, and then I walked briskly to the great door and knocked. The sound of my knocking echoed dismally thru the old building, but it was some moments before there was any response. As I stood waiting I stepped back and threw a glance at the upper windows where the light was burning, and as I did so I saw a face appear. It was visible for an instant and then it vanished, but even that brief glance had convinced me that the face was that of Felipa Estrada!

The sound of steps coming from within told me that my knock had brought a response. I heard a key turn in the lock, and then as the door was opened, an uncouth figure stood at the threshold, a squat figure not over four feet in height with a hideous, leering visage almost covered with a dark, massive beard.

The strange creature stood blinking at me with a queer curl about his thick lips.

"Who are you and what do you want?" he asked, speaking in Spanish.

"I want to see Senorita Felipa," I replied, in the best Spanish I could muster.

He stood leering at me, as if undecided what to do. I began to believe he was a half-witted creature, for the look on his face which was lighted by the rising moon showed a lack of intelligence, but for all that there was evidence of low cunning in his glance.

"Do you come from the don?" he asked.

I told him that I did, but thought it unnecessary to add that it was Don Fernando instead of Don Estrada. He hesitated for a moment, and then step-

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ping aside, signaled for me to enter.

He led the way thru a dark hallway, and opening a door on the left, bade me enter. The room in which I found myself was in total darkness save where the beams of the moon fell thru an eastern window, and I stood there in the gloom while the dwarf lighted a big brass lamp that hung suspended from the high ceiling.

As the rays of the lamp dispelled the darkness I glanced about, perceiving that I was in a very large room which I took to be a library—or a sort of combined library and living-room. The furniture was massive, of mahogany, and must have been a century old.

As soon as the dwarf had lighted the lamp he turned a searching glance on me, which I met with a look of careless indifference. His eyes fell before my gaze, and with a bow he turned to the door.

"If the senor will wait," he said, pausing with his hand on the latch, "I will see if I can find Senorita Felipa."

He shuffled thru the door and was gone. As I listened to his footsteps in the hallway I remembered that Don Fernando had spoken of a dwarf being at the castle—a hideous creature whom they called Nemo—a servant of some sort, who was a slave to his master, the don.

I believed that the dwarf had half suspected me, but as I was now convinced that Don Estrada was absent from the castle, I did not doubt my ability to deal with this strange creature.

I flung myself into an easy chair and waited. I could hear no sound. The gloomy old building was as silent as the grave, and there was something oppressive in the silence that gave me an unpleasant feeling.

The minutes went by; a half-hour passed, and still there was no sign of the dwarf. I did not like that. It came to me that the dwarf, being unable to decide as to whether he should trust me or not, might have gone to consult some one of higher authority regarding the matter. The thought gave me a vague sense of uneasiness.

I got up presently, and opening the door, stepped into the hall. I stopped there and listened, but could hear nothing. At the far end of the hall I saw a glow of moonlight, which I rightly guessed came thru a window, and slipping noiselessly to it, I looked out into the grounds. I could see no one, nor was there a sound to indicate that there was any living soul about the place but myself.

I returned to the library and waited. A quarter of an hour passed, and then I thought I caught the sound of a step in an adjoining room, near the door which opened into it. I waited and listened for a full minute, but the sound was not repeated. Then I got up and approached the door. I stood listening for a moment, and then lighting a match quickly, I opened the door and stepped into the room. I flung a quick glance about, but could see no one. On a table was a brass candlestick containing a half-burned candle, and lighting this I inspected the room, but could find no trace of any one.

Then I set the candle on the table and passed thru the door on my left and entered the hall, and it was then that I encountered the adventure detailed in the beginning of my story.

And now as I again sat in the library waiting, the memory of my struggle with the dwarf in the dark room gave me an unpleasant sensation. That he had intended to murder me I had but little doubt; that he might repeat his attempt on my life, I fully realized. But I had little fear of him. I slipped my hand into my pocket to assure myself that the automatic .32 was still there. This deadly little engine of destruction I had no intention of using except in self-defense.

What had become of the dwarf? Was he in conference with some one and planning another attack? Where was Felipa? I wondered if Nemo had taken my message to her, and if she would consent to see me without knowing who I was. That she was in the house—that I had seen her face at the window—I was fully convinced.

My reflections were interrupted by the sound of footsteps in the hall. In the sound I recognized the shambling movements of Nemo, the dwarf. The handle of the door turned, and springing to it I slid back the bolt and flung the door open. The dwarf stood before me. There was something furtive in his glance that told me that he was guilty of some evil design which he was trying to keep from me.

"You saw Senorita Felipa?" I asked.

"Yes, senor," he said humbly; "but she will not see you."

He evaded my eye as he spoke, and I felt instinctively that he was lying.

"Look here," I cried, "if you are lying to me it will be all the worse for you! You have not seen Senorita Felipa?"

He backed away, his face working with conflicting evidence of fear and cunning.

"She will not see you, senor!" he repeated.

"You are telling me the truth?"

"Yes, senor."

"What did she say?" I demanded.

He hesitated. "She doesn't want to see anybody," he stammered.

I threw the door wide open. "Come in where there is a light," I commanded. "I want to talk this matter over with you."

He obeyed—a little reluctantly, I thought. He removed the hat from his shaggy head and stood in a respectful attitude, waiting for me to speak.

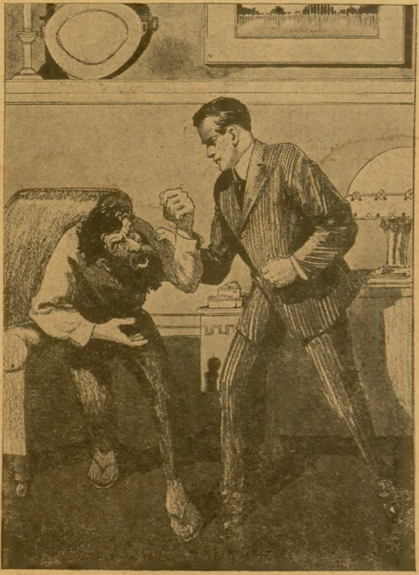
"Now, Nemo," I said, "I want you to tell me the truth." I looked him straight in the eye.

"How did you know my name, senor?" he asked, a look of surprise on his face.

"Never mind that," I interposed. "I want you to tell me why you are lying to me—why you came back a few minutes ago and attacked me in the room there?" I flung my hand toward the adjoining room in which I had had the encounter with him in the dark.

The dwarf cowered under my glance. There was guilt in his face, and he seemed to realize that he had not succeeded in deceiving me. He glanced toward the door as if he would like to escape. But being convinced that he was guilty, I had no intention of pressing the matter. I might bring him to be of service to me.

"We shall say no more about that," I said, "if you will be honest with me. I want you to take me to Senorita Felipa."



"If you are lying it will be worse for you."

I drew forth some silver coins and dropped them into his hand.

His manner changed as if by magic at sight of the money. He thrust it into his pocket and making a very low bow, murmured: "Mucho obligacion, senor."

"You will take me to Senorita Felipa?" I asked.

"I can't, senor," he trembled.

"Why?"

"She is locked in her room, and if I tried to open the door my master would kill me!" he said, shaking with fear.

"Whom do you call your master?" I demanded.

"Don Estrada," he replied.

"He is not here?"

"No, senor."

"Have you the key to Senorita Felipa's room?"

"No, senor. The housekeeper has the keys."

"Where is she?"

"I do not know," replied the dwarf.

"Who else beside yourself is here?"

"Only other servants and Senorita Felipa."

"Why is it that Senorita Felipa is locked in her room?" I asked.

The dwarf shook his head. "My master never tells me why he does things," he said.

"Then it was Don Estrada that locked her up?"

The dwarf blinked at me with his small eyes, but he did not reply. Evidently he was afraid to say.

"Where are the other servants?" I asked.

"Gone to the village," he said. "They will soon come back, senor. Will the senor go now?" he asked pleadingly.

"Why?" I demanded.

"If the master found you here, and you were not known to him he would kill you for a spy!"

The words had scarcely left his lips when the sound of voices broke thru the silence of the night, and almost instantly there came a loud knocking at the door. A look of terror came over the face of the dwarf and he turned to me, his features twitching with fear.

"It is Don Estrada!" he said, in a hoarse whisper, "he and his men! Listen, senor," he went on. "If you are not his friend he will kill you for a spy and will kill me for letting you into the house!"

His voice trembled and was hoarse with fear. I felt, with a sudden thrill of fear, the dreadful import of his words. I was not a friend of Don Estrada's, and that his finding me inside his house might cost me my life I had little doubt. What was I to do? To face the Satanic don and his murderous crew did not offer a pleasant prospect. Something must be done!

Nemo had come very close to me. "Senor," he said, his face showing a sickly yellow, "for the Holy Mother of God's sake go—go at once!—if you are not the don's friend!"

"I am not his friend," I admitted, "but I shall not run from him!"

"Que horror!" cried the dwarf. "You must not stay! He will kill you as he would a rat!"

He was shaking with fear, while I stood for a moment a full sense of my danger gripping me.

"He will kill us both, I tell you!" breathed the dwarf hoarsely. "For the Holy Virgin's sake, come!"

He seized me by the arm and tried to draw me with him.

"What do you want me to do?" I asked, in a state of vague fear and bewilderment.

"Come, let me hide you," he entreated. "You can remain there till the way is open for me to let you out. He will kill me if you stay!"

He flung the door open and half dragged me into the hall. Then he pointed to a stairway at the end of the passage.

"Go down the stairs and into the ruined wing and wait there till I come," the dwarf pleaded. "If you will do this I will try to have you see the Senorita Felipa! Go! Go! for the Holy Virgin's sake, senor!"

Without another word he left me and fled toward the stairway at the front of the building. I could hear his lubberly footfalls on the stairs as he went lumbering down. And above the sound floated the impatient oaths of Don Estrada as he beat furiously upon the door.

I stood debating with myself as to what I should do, and then convinced that I should act upon the advice given by the dwarf, I swung swiftly down the hallway, descended the stairs, and passed thru the door at the rear of the building.

On my right, half in ruins, was the north wing of the building. It was half covered with creeping vines. I pushed my way thru the vines and entered the old ruin thru the broken wall. The place in which I found myself was as black as a cave. I seated myself on a flat stone and tried to think coherently.

I could hear the sound of Don Estrada's voice at the door mingled with loud knocking; and presently the sounds ceased as the door was flung open and he entered.

I felt that I had made a wise choice in avoiding an encounter with the don and his followers. But I was depressed with a sense of my defeat in my attempt to execute the commission that had brought me to Mexico. The jewels were gone, and had probably been squandered at the gambling table long ago. Accepting this as a strong probability, it seemed to my sober sense that it was folly to linger at the castle, yet I could not bring myself to accept my defeat and retire.

If I could see Felipa Estrada I felt that she might enlighten me as to what had become of the jewels. But how should I contrive to see her? I had little faith that the dwarf would keep his promise, which had probably been made with the sole purpose of getting me out of the house before the don should discover my presence and hold him accountable for it. Yet it might be worth my while to wait and see. From what Nemo had said, it appeared that the girl was locked in her room. Why was she made a prisoner? Was it the work of her father, to punish her for defeating his attempt to get hold of the jewels?

I was determined to get at the bottom of it all, tho I must confess that it seemed quite a foolish thing to do. But I didn't mind that. The spirit of adventure was upon me, and my blood was up. I was ripe for a clash with the arrogant Don Estrada, who, as I believed, was a conscienceless bully. And sitting there in the black darkness of the old ruin, I waited. An hour passed, and then I heard the babble of voices and the tramp of feet.

I crept across the ruins to where the rays of the moon were stealing thru the broken wall, and there I could see a number of men—a forbidding crew, issuing from the great door of the castle. They hurried across the grounds, and mounting their horses that stood at the gate, they rode away noisily, as if under the influence of liquor.

I wondered if Don Estrada had gone with them. I retraced my steps across the room, stumbling over the fallen debris, and pushing my way thru the vines that trailed across the gap in the wall, I stepped out and stood for a moment in the moonlight.

At that moment the sound of a step on the stones came from behind, and turning, I was confronted by a tall stranger. He had a haughty bearing, and there was a sinister look on his face as the rays of the rising moon fell upon it. He was lighting a cigar, and he stopped abruptly as he threw the match away, and looked at me with a sneer on his lips.

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this remarkable story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Family Trees.

"John, said Mrs. Atwood, thoughtfully, "everybody in society appears to think an awful lot of genealogy these days."

"Jennie what?" exclaimed John, as he looked up from his evening paper.

"Genealogy," repeated Mrs. Atwood.

"What's that?"

"I don't exactly know," replied Mrs. Atwood, "but I think it's a tree of some kind. At least, I heard some ladies refer to it as a family tree."

"Well, what of it?" he asked.

"Why, it seems to be a sort of fad, you know, and every one who is any one has to have one, I suppose."

"Buy one, then," he said, irritably. "Buy the best one in town and have the bill sent to me, but don't bother me with the details of that affair. Get one, and stick it up in the conservatory, if you want one, and if it isn't too large."

"But I don't know anything about them."

"Find out, and if it's too large for the conservatory, stick it up on the lawn, and if that ain't big enough, I'll buy the next garden in order to make room. There can't any of them fly any higher than we can, and if it comes to a question of trees, I'll buy a whole orchard for you."

Still she hesitated.

"The fact is, John," she confessed at last, "I don't just know where to go for anything in that line. Where do they keep the family trees and all such things."

"What do you suppose I know about it?" he exclaimed. "You're running the fashion end of this establishment, and I don't want to be bothered with it. If the florist can't tell you anything about it, hunt up a first-class nurseryman and place your order with him."

The Wife Who Dared

-:- Or, -:-

The Suicide Pact

By Gerald Harden

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CHAPTER VI.
THE GAMBLE.

BOTH Tenterring and Phillipson were strong men. The former had been an athlete of note during his college days. When he left his studies he did not also drop the exercise that had hardened his limbs and toughened his body. Phillipson was by nature of powerful physique. A hectic life had made flabby his muscles, but there was immense strength in reserve.

Sprawled upon the floor in each other's tense grip, they squirmed for an instant. The fingers at Tenterring's throat closed more tightly, and his face began to assume a bluish tinge. But as Phillipson tried to fix his knee upon the other's chest, the prostrate man suddenly turned upon his side. Before his opponent could divine his purpose, he raised the revolver and with all the power in his brawny right arm brought down the butt upon Phillipson's head.

Phillipson's limbs quivered as with palsy. The fingers gripped in Tenterring's throat slowly relaxed. The man's face turned a ghastly gray-white. Eyes closed, he rolled over on his back insensible.

Panting hard, Tenterring staggered to his feet. He looked down vacantly at the unconscious figure. Then he coughed hard. When he raised his handkerchief to his mouth and drew it away he found it stained red with his blood.

His wife, with hands spread before her eyes to shut out the sight of the conflict, had stood cowed and white. But when the lull came, she dared to look at the two men.

From her husband, erect but shaken, she turned her gaze to his prostrate antagonist. A thin trickle of red was beginning to issue from the wound in Phillipson's head where Tenterring's blow had landed. It ran slowly down his temple to his ear. The sight of it brought horror to the woman's face.

"Oh, you've killed him, you've killed him!" she shrilled. "You brute, you've killed him!"

"Keep quiet, will you!" Tenterring panted unevenly. "You'll have the servants down on us with your noise. This is not for them to see."

He knelt beside the prostrate figure and wiped the red line away. Phillipson's eyelids quivered and then slowly opened. With Tenterring's aid he slowly rose to his feet and then crumpled into a chair. The woman hurried to his side, and with a murmur between a sob and a moan softly smoothed his blanched cheeks. The sight renewed the husband's inward rage.

"You get out of here!" he ordered. "Go to your room. Leave him to me."

"I'll do nothing of the sort!" she returned savagely. "I wouldn't dare. You'd kill him."

"That's what the viper deserves," Tenterring shot back hoarsely.

The man's face surged crimson with anger. His fingers gripped hard again about the handle of the revolver. But the spasm passed and he sank back weakly upon the couch where he had discovered Phillipson and his wife when he first entered the room.

With his chin sunk in his chest he gazed for a long time at the pair opposite him. Some momentous problem showed in the furrows that accumulated between his eyes. A look of hopelessness slowly overspread his countenance. Twice he opened his lips as if to speak, but the words appeared to clog in his throat. At the third attempt he muttered brokenly:

"You love him, don't you?"

His wife looked up at him haughtily. Her disheveled head braced back defiantly in a way he had seen so often in recent days.

"Love him?" she replied spiritedly. "Of course, I do. Why shouldn't I? He's been kind and gentle to me. You haven't cared."

"Haven't cared, eh?" The husband's head shook sadly. "Would to God that I didn't!"

"He was my real lover always," the woman went on brokenly. "You should not have come between us. I was a fool to let you—a fool—a little fool!"

Her words forced Tenterring into another deep study. A great resolve slowly evolved from the tumult in his brain. He arose, paced across the room and back again, his face bent to the floor in profound thought. Then he paused to lay his weapon upon a table.

"Come, Jack," his wife broke in at length. "You must go."

The husband halted sternly.

"No, he can't go," he declared with decision, "until this affair is settled."

A silence profound and tense followed. The wife looked expectantly, her companion vaguely at the husband.

"This ought to be settled with justifiable murder," Tenterring spoke at last. "But I've thought out another way. It'll avoid murder, but will be as effective. I'm willing to take the chance if this—this snake here is." He waved his hand contemptuously at Phillipson.

"Well, what is it?" asked the injured man, weakly. "I'm not afraid of any chance you're willing to take."

Tenterring ignored the rejoinder. He addressed himself to his wife directly.

"It's perfectly plain where I stand with you," he said, quite steadily. He paused as if searching for the right way to express himself. Then he went on bitterly: "I might as well be dead. I wish I were. You'd be happy. There isn't room for him and me. I know that. One of us has got to go. But who?"

"Give me a divorce, Guy," his wife broke in quickly.

"Like h—l I will," he retorted angrily. "My name is clear of any cause for that. And I won't smear yours—much as you deserve it."

"What then?" she inquired torturedly.

"Either he or I has got to go. I've got to where I don't care. This, then, is my proposition: We'll make an agreement—a gentleman's agreement—if such a thing is possible with such as he—that one or the other of us will be dead before midnight."

Tenterring glanced at the little clock ticking busily away on the mantelpiece.

"There's just ten minutes more of life for one of us," he said, with a whimsical smile.

Questioning horror dilated his wife's eyes anew. Phillipson's gray cheeks drained white.

"You mean—you mean—suicide," the woman gasped, clutching at her companion's shoulder for support.

"Just that," answered her husband, promptly.

"But—but how will you decide who's to—to—go?" she panted.

"Why, we'll decide like real sports," replied Tenterring, as if the suggestion amused him. "We'll flip a coin."

The woman fell limply into a chair, but Phillipson struggled to his feet.

"I'll agree to that," he said, unevenly. "It's more of a chance than I expected ten minutes ago."

"You've got to agree," announced the other, with finality, "or I'll make the hole in you myself."

"No—no—no!" cried the woman, rising excitedly. "I won't let you."

"You keep out of this," commanded her husband, roughly.

He drew a coin—a silver half-dollar—from his pocket and passed it to Phillipson.

"You may toss it," he said steadily. "I'll call."

"No—no—no!" reiterated Mrs. Tenterring. "I'll call the police. I'll summon the servants. You can't do this."

"You'll sit quite still," declared her husband, picking up the revolver, "or you'll go before either of us."

The woman fell back, cowed and helpless.

"Now, then," Tenterring addressed himself to his rival as if discussing a minor business deal, "when you toss, I'll call. It will fall head or tail. If I call 'head' and it falls head, you die by midnight. If it falls tail, I die. If I call 'tail' and it falls so, you die. If it falls head, I go out. Do you understand?"

Phillipson nodded his head.

"Do you agree?"

Phillipson again nodded. Tenterring stretched out his hand. The other man did likewise. The tips of their fingers barely touched. It was the sealing of the pact.

Mrs. Tenterring looked on, wild-eyed and breathless.

"Now then!" ordered the husband.

Phillipson braced himself, but his hand shook fearfully as he flung the shining coin into the air.

It rose almost to the ceiling.

Tenterring closed his eyes for an instant.

"Head," he said quite firmly.

The coin fell to the heavy rug without a sound. It did not settle immediately but rolled some distance, quivered and then gently drooped upon its side.

The woman sprawled headlong toward the spot. She bent her face close to the coin. A cry of anguish choked her throat. She collapsed in a dead faint. There was no need for either of the men to inspect the shining piece to learn who had lost. They both knew. But without a word they stepped together to the spot. They bent their heads together. The laurel-wreathed bas-relief head of Miss Liberty shone up at them. Phillipson was to die.

Both men straightened and glanced at each other.

"You lose," announced Tenterring, evenly and without satisfaction.

Phillipson spoke no word. He dared not trust his voice. But he nodded in acquiescence.

The husband lifted his wife and placed her upon the couch. Then he strode back to Phillipson, who stood as if in a daze, and without a word placed the revolver in his hands.

Phillipson looked at it vacantly and thrust it into his pocket. Tenterring, still silent, opened the outer door of the room. His rival walked toward it. For an instant he turned to glance at the unconscious figure on the couch. With a shudder he went on out.

Without a word the master of the house accompanied him down the stairs, and opened the outer door. Phillipson disappeared into the night.

Tenterring locked the door and stood for a moment in profound thought. As he started to ascend the stairs, the great clock in the hall began to toll the hour of midnight. He counted one—two—three—four—five — six — seven—eight—nine—ten—eleven——

A muffled shot without stopped the beating of his heart and then drove it pounding away in wild palpitation. He slowly climbed the stairs to his wife's apartments. One moment it seemed as if a great load had been removed from his heart. The next it seemed as if a heavier one was settling down upon it.

When he reached his wife's side, she still lay in a deep swoon.

"Thank God, she did not hear!" he breathed fervently.

At daybreak next morning early passers-by discovered the cold and lifeless body of Guy Phillipson stretched at full length beside the outer gates of the Tenterring estate. A wound just above the heart had brought death.

CHAPTER VII.
THE PROBLEM.

TENTERRING spent a most unhappy night. His first mission after he had heard the doleful shot was to his wife. By a vigorous application of smelling salts he had brought her back to sensibility. He watched her carefully as her eyelids began to flicker and her cheeks to show traces of their habitual pink. He gently assisted her to a sitting posture when her eyes opened wide and her hands groped for support.

In a daze for a moment, her mind quickly cleared. Her eyes searched every part of the room. Then they bored into her husband.

"Where is he?" she asked in alarm. "What have you done with him?"

"Be calm, child," Tenterring answered gently. "He has gone. You had better retire."

"Gone? Where?"

"He left five minutes ago," the husband equivocated.

"Did you carry out that dreadful gamble?" she hurried on. "He lost, didn't he, when the coin fell? Was it fair? Was it honest? It was your money, wasn't it? Are you sure it was fair?"

She staggered to her feet and caught the lapels of her husband's coat. She tried to shake him as if to force the truth from him, but her strength was insufficient. Unsteadily she slid back on the couch.

"Please don't take on so, Madalyn," Tenterring said solicitously. "You are worn now to the edge of hysteria. You'll make yourself ill."

"What do I care?" she went on breathlessly. "Where is he, I say? What has happened to him? Tell me, tell me, I say! Have you killed him? Has he killed himself? Oh, it's my fault, it's my fault!"

With her face buried in her hands, she swayed back and forth in a paroxysm of grief and remorse. Tenterring touched her gently on the shoulder.

"Come, Madalyn, I'll help you to your bed," he urged. "You will be better off there."

She jerked herself savagely away from him.

"Tell me truly, oh, tell me!" she wailed. "Is he dead? You know. You must know. Tell me," and she threw at him a glance as of one mad.

"I don't know," responded her husband simply.

She collapsed limply again. The light left her eyes, her arms dragged to her sides. She would have fallen over had not Tenterring gathered her up in his arms. Absolutely exhausted, she was too weak to resist. He carried her to her bedchamber, laid her upon the bed, and gently drew a coverlet over her.

"Please rest now," he enjoined her. "You will need your strength for the morning. There are some disagreeable hours ahead of us. Good night."

She did not answer him, but he heard her sob dryly, agonizingly, as he quit the room. In the seclusion of his own room, he threw off his outer garments and donned a bathrobe. Then he turned off the light, opened the shades and looked out into the night. But it was too dark to make out anything except the dim outlines of great trees. He tried to recall the direction from which the sound of the shot had come, but his recollection was fickle. Once he imagined he beheld the figure of a man stretched prone at the bottom of his front steps, but a second look convinced him it was only fancy.

With a heavy sigh, he dropped upon his bed, stretched out upon his back, threw upward his clasped hands, and propping his head in the palms began to think.

At first he fully justified himself for his part in the horrid night's work. An honest, loyal husband could have done no less. In fact, he should have done more. No jury in the world, he argued with himself, would have convicted him had he slain Phillipson, as it was his early intention. But fortunately—and Tenterring felt just a mite of satisfaction in the thought—it was not necessary to call himself a murderer. His hands were clear of any bloodstain. The man presumably lying dead out there in the dark was a suicide. That he was absolutely sure of, and that made him absolutely safe.

Yet, the more he thought of the possible developments of the night, the less satisfied was he with the prospect. There would be an official investigation of Phillipson's death following the discovery of the body. He would undoubtedly be called upon to answer some pointed questions as to what he might know about the tragedy. He would be asked by some prying minion of the law to disclose where he had been during the night.

Ah, there would be a rub! His household understood that he had started for Boston on the previous day. He was to have been gone for at least forty-eight hours. Yet here he was back in his home, unannounced, like a thief in the night. It would sound a bit strange, he was forced to admit to himself.

Well, he had a nimble mind. He felt certain he could conjure an adequate explanation. Anyway, his hands were clean.

Then a graver situation confronted him. His wife—what would be her attitude? Would she reveal the circumstances of the night? Would she, in her evident devotion to Phillipson, disclose the real inspiration of the tragedy? Would she defend the dead man's name? Or would she decide to stand with her husband?

Tentering refused to think that she would dare to confess her own failing. She was proud of her name, even tho she had placed it in jeopardy. He thought she could be counted on to hold her peace, at least. He would make it an imperative point to see her early in the morning and adjust their explanations.

But the longer he considered the dilemma, the less certain did he regard the outlook. Stirred as he was to the depths of his soul by the revelation of his wife's liaison, he still found a yearning kindness in his heart for her. He had not been so attentive to her, he admitted, as her innate desire for admiration demanded. She had been a belle, he recalled, from her first entry into society. She had been the object of ardent adulation. She was a devotee of the dance. She loved life—high life. That was not her fault. She had been born to it. She needed it as she needed the air she breathed. It had been his fault that she had not been satisfied. He easily recalled his inattentions. He remembered times when she had begged for entertainment and he had turned her requests aside inconsiderately. He could not count all the times he had declined to go to functions, but had allowed her to attend them alone. She was not a bad woman. Of that he was positive. Frivolous, perhaps, and at times daring and rebellious, but no worse than many other butterflies in her set.

Therefore—and his jaws set and his fingers gripped as the resolution formed—he would protect her name. He would see that she came unsullied thru the present ordeal. Yes, even tho he had to assume all the guilt himself. He was a man. He could afford to bear ignominy. She was still his wife. She had long years to live. He would see that she could live them without a stain upon woman's most blessed possession—her good name.

Then his thoughts went back to Phillipson. The man was dead. Of that he was convinced. Had he not heard the fatal shot? And yet—and yet—an insistent doubt bothered him. Phillipson he had always considered a bit of a moral coward. Was he the type of man to carry out the death pact in which he had been the loser? Did he have the nerve to hold a revolver against his temple or his heart and press the trigger? Might he not have fired the weapon aimlessly? Might not the bullet have spent itself in the air?

Well, he would go and see. But having risen from the bed, he sat down again. He must not go out into the night to make search. He must know nothing of what had happened after Phillipson had left his threshold. His footprints must not be discovered in the soft earth about the spot where Phillipson's body lay. He must be careful of suspicion. Not for his own sake, but for that of his wife.

In his disquiet of mind he could no longer lie or sit. He got to his feet again and began to pace the length of his room. Back and forth, back and forth he trod, turning over the problem of the night and its probable outcome. And the climax of every conclusion was this—he must protect his wife's name.

In his quandary hours passed. He heard a single automobile scurry by and later the rattle of wagon wheels. But even when the first gray flicker of dawn crept thru the window shades, he conquered his curiosity. Even when the gray turned to pink and then to white he refused to look out upon the road to see whether or not the body of Phillipson lay there.

Then of a sudden he paused as if struck. An overpowering recollection turned his sight red. A tremor ran thru his sturdy frame. The revolver he had turned over to Phillipson bore upon its ivory and silver handle Tenterring's own monogram. Why had he not thought of it before? Were Phillipson found dead with that fatally marked weapon beside him, suspicion, even open charges, would lie at his door. He must recover the weapon.

But even as he resolved to plunge out into the daylight and try to find and hide the revolver, there came from below the persistent ring of house-bells, followed, after a pause, by the opening of an outer door and the sound of subdued but excited voices. Tenterring could restrain himself no longer. He hurried into the hall and ran quickly down the stairs. At the foot he faced a trembling man-servant.

"What is it, Stevens?" he asked, keeping his voice steady with an effort.

"Oh, sir," the man stammered, "I did not know you were at home! Something awful's happened. They've found a man shot to death at the front gate."

"Who—who is it?" Tenterring gulped.

"I don't know, sir, but the sheriff's here and he wants to talk to somebody, sir."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE QUIZ.

TENTERRING took a grip on himself and hastened to the door. "Ah, sheriff, an early call," was his greeting. He forced a smile to his lips.

"And an unpleasant one, I'm afraid," responded the sheriff. "I thought you were away. Your man said so."

"Came back last night," Tenterring answered, a bit lamely.

Despite an unfinished exterior—for "Dunk" Hildebrand always failed to finish tying his cravat or to loop all the buttons in his vest or to smooth his shaggy gray hair—the sheriff was the best criminal hunter Nassau County had had in twenty years. He had been an under-sheriff for so many moons that he had grown to know every good and every bad man in the region. A good deal of bluff and bluster had gone along with his accomplishments, but "Dunk's" ferret-like brown eyes had seldom failed him when it came to sizing up a guilty man.

"What's the bother now?" inquired Tenterring. "Come in, won't you?"

"Don't mind if I do." The sheriff stepped into the hall. "You didn't know a feller going by in his car at daylight had picked up Jack Phillipson's dead body lying just outside your front gate, did you?"

"Phillipson? You don't say!" The man of the house found it hard to equivocate. "Killed by an auto?"

"So the party thought that picked him up," answered the sheriff, with an air of pride, "but when I come to look 'im over I found a hole in his chest and a crack on the head. He's been murdered."

"It can't be, Hildebrand," Tenterring was able to say in surprise. He had confidently expected the sheriff to say that Phillipson had killed himself. But murder? Here was a new twist. "How do you know?"

"Wall, if he'd done the job himself—and, of course, he had no reason to do that—we'd found a weapon round where he'd fallen, wouldn't we? Wall, we didn't. It's murder, sure as you're shivering."

The host took quick advantage of the sheriff's reference about "shivering."

"Yes, I am cold, Dunk," he said. "I only slipped on a bathrobe to come down in. Step into the library and make yourself at home until I can get into some more clothes," and he pushed open the door into a heavy-volumed room and pointed Hildebrand to a big easy chair.

"Oh, Stevens," he called, "take some whisky and water in to Sheriff Hildebrand. He'll need some. It's chilly this morning. Help yourself, Dunk," and he hurried up the stairs to the second floor.

But he did not go at once to his own apartments. Instead he pushed his way to his wife's side. He found her where he had left her. She lay a crumpled, white-faced figure, on the bed. Her golden hair was awry, one heavy strand reaching above her pillow, another flowing down over her rounded, ivory shoulder. She was heavy in sleep.

Tenterring touched her gently, but she did not stir. Then he shook her slightly. She opened her eyes slowly as if in affright. When she recognized her husband standing over her, she shuddered. Her face was haggard with woe.

"Please listen to me, Madalyn," he said quietly. "It is vital for both of us."

She did not answer. The deep black half-circles beneath her eyes gave her an almost uncanny appearance.

"They have found him out at the gate—dead," Tenterring went on as calmly as his palpitating heart would permit.

She rose to her elbow at the fateful word. Her eyes seemed about to leave their sockets. Then she fell back with a moan, one hand gripping violently at her bosom.

"Dead—dead—dead!" she echoed hollowly.

"We must prepare for an ordeal," Tenterring continued, after a pause. "The sheriff is below. He is going to quiz me. He may want to do the same with you."

Her glance roamed unseeingly about the room.

"I intend to hide nothing," she finally said.

"I beg of you to be careful of yourself. I don't care much what you say of me, but I don't want you to be involved. I shall do everything to protect you that lies in my power."

"I don't ask anything of you," she responded coldly. "I don't want you to do anything for me."

"I shall go to all lengths to keep you out of this—to save you from yourself."

She laughed strangely, almost hysterically.

"Remember, please, you are still my wife," Tenterring went on grimly.

She looked at him defiantly. "Go away, go away!" she flared. "I hate the sight of you!"

Tenterring moved like a shaken man to the door.

"I will keep you out of this even if I have to lie myself into hell," he declared solemnly. Then he left the room.

The sheriff was moistening his throat with a second helping of liquor when Tenterring rejoined him. There was no question in his eyes at the delay in his host's return.

"Good stuff that," he exclaimed, as he inclined one fat hand in the direction of the bottle. "Needed it. Been a shaky mornin.' Phillipson was a good friend of mine, you know. Helped elect me. Gave a hundred to the campaign fund. I've got to clear this up."

"Sure you have, Dunk," echoed Tenterring. "But let us hear what you have found out."

"Mighty little." The sheriff shook his head. "Come here 'ith the idee you could give us some light."

"Sorry—but I can't," the man of the house returned evenly. He hated to lie. So he framed his answer in a way that was open to two meanings. That was some balm to him in his distress.

"Didn't hear any shot during the night, eh?"

"If I did, I might have mistaken it for a bursting auto tire. They sound alike, you know."

"Doctor Herring says he must 'a' been dead about six hours. That would have put the killing about midnight. You were home then?"

"Oh, yes," Tenterring nodded emphatically. But he shuddered inwardly. The ice was getting thin.

"Home all evening?"

"No, not all evening.'

"What time 'd you get in?"

The host glanced sharply at the sheriff, but in the latter's fat face there was no sign that the query was other than guileless.

"Haven't an idea, Dunk. Didn't look at my watch, but think it was rather late."

"Midnight?"

"Oh, earlier than that considerably."

"No trace of Phillipson lying out there then, of course?"

"Of course not," Tenterring answered quickly and vigorously. "That's an odd idea of yours, Dunk. You don't think I'd have passed that without seeing it, do you?"

"Beg pardon, beg pardon!" the sheriff hastened to apologize. "Of course not, of course not. That popped out 'ithout me thinking." He raised a hand to scratch his shaggy head. "He wasn't here when you got home, eh?" he queried.

This was a facer, but Tenterring met it steadily.

"Certainly not," he returned emphatically.

"You didn't see his runabout drawn up at your side door, then?"

The waters were beginning to thicken for Tenterring. It was not so easy to answer the questions of this unsuspecting official as he had thought it would be. Moreover, in what a difficult position he would be placed by his replies if his wife clung to her intention to "conceal nothing."

"His runabout here?" rejoined he. "Well, that's odd."

"Ain't it?" coincided the sheriff, and for the first time Tenterring noted a quizzical little shift in his caller's eyes. "Standing out there still. Strange when he drove up so close that he didn't come in."

"It certainly is," the host agreed heartily.

Dunk began rubbing the edge of the table with the ends of his fat fingers. It was a way he had when his mind was active.

"Your wife was home?" he queried at length. There was a trace of apology in his tone.

"Oh, yes. Home all evening. Fast asleep now." Tenterring got over the answer in a hurry. He recalled afterward that it seemed to him at the time as if he were treading on blazing embers in bare feet.

"And you didn't see Phillipson's runabout here when you got home?" The sheriff repeated his question.

It galled Tenterring to lie so flatly. But there was no other way now. He had made his statements to Hildebrand so positive, so unretractable, that there was no other course for him. He must keep on lying. Once it flashed thru his mind that he might have told the whole miserable story of the night to the sheriff and begged him to hold it sacred. The sheriff was a decent chap. He might have agreed to such a suggestion. But it was too late. He had adopted the perilous defense of falsehood. He must stick to it.

"No, I didn't see any car," Tenterring replied.

"How'd you come home, anyway?" quizzed Dunk.

"That's a queer question," sparred the man of the house, taken unawares. "What makes you ask that?"

"Well, you see I'm puzzled about Phillipson's car. If it was here when you got home, you would have cert'nly seen it, wouldn't you? Your own car couldn't have got by on the drive with the runabout standing there, could it? I suppose you came home in your car?"

Every new question of the sheriff made Tenterring's position increasingly difficult. He began to fear that just ahead of him were questions that would drive him floundering into a sea of unreasonable and unreconcilable explanations.

"No, I didn't come home in a car," he said, assuming an air of unconcern. "I walked home."

The sheriff's eyebrows lifted in surprise. Then he laughed outright.

"Walked home?" he chuckled. "Why, Mr. Tenterring, you haven't done such a thing as that in the last five years. Come, now, tell us the right of it."

"No, Dunk, I wasn't tipsy," smiled the host, a bit lamely. "I'd been out of town all day and didn't expect to get back last night, so no one met me at the station. It was so late I didn't want to rout anybody out, so I just plodded up the hill on foot."

"What train 'd you come on?" the sheriff inquired. His interest appeared to increase with Tenterring's discomfiture.

"Why, the ten-thirty-seven, I believe it was," the latter stumbled.

"Funny I didn't see you," promptly returned Hildebrand. "I was on that train myse'f. I'd been takin' a bad hobo into

Before Drinking Coffee, You Should Consider Whether Or Not It Is Harmful

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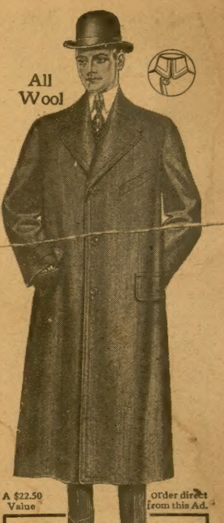

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the county jail at Mineola. Funny I missed you. Where'd you set?"

"In the parlor car," Tenterring ventured, with an inward tremole.

"Mebbe that accounts for it. I was in the smoker."

On the very rim of information that would have tumbled down Tenterring's tottering structure of subterfuge, the sheriff halted, rubbed his finger along the table edge as was his wont, wrinkled his brow a bit and then said:

"Your wife know anything about this?"

The sudden diversion of the official line of questioning gave Tenterring a new shiver of apprehension. What was he to say now? How could he with safety foretell his wife's attitude? What would she answer to the sheriff's inquiries? Would her answers wreck the case he had made out to the sheriff—made to protect her rather than himself? He smarted sorely. Yet he must answer.

He shook his head quite vigorously.

"Not a thing, I'm sure," he added by way of emphasis.

"Haven't seen her since you got home, eh?"

Here was another facer. It was just lie—lie—lie now. Tenterring was inwardly frantic.

"No," he snapped. "But I'm sure she knows nothing. Anyway, she is asleep now and I wouldn't waken her."

He found himself trying to put off the evil day. But the sheriff would not be denied.

"I'll be up to see her this afternoon. There's a chance, you know, that she might have heard something during the night," he said.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COMPLICATION.

TENTERRING accompanied the sheriff to the door and then down the broad stone walk to the road. Together they reached the spot where Phillipson's body had been found. The ground was moist and bore the imprint of many feet.

"That's bad," said Hildebrand, pointing to the confusion of footprints in the soft earth. "If there was only one set of these, it might be easy to measure them and start a hunt for the man who wears shoes to fit these holes. But there's no chance of that now. Looks as if about everybody in Nassau County had been tramping about here."

Tenterring shivered inwardly as his eyes marked out the spot where Phillipson's body had lain. The impression in the tender earth was plainly evident. His mind went busy conjuring the sight of his rival standing here in the road, with the revolver pressed to his breast. Now he could imagine the sharp crack of the weapon, followed by the gush of white smoke. Now he could see the look of mortal agony on the dying man's face as his arms drooped limply and the revolver fell from his grip. Now he could see the ghastly face upturned to the brooding sky. Now he could see the unsteady figure stagger backward a step and then sink palsied to the earth. Now he could see the prostrate form stiffen and the staring eyes set in a fearsome glaze.

His heart sickened as the full picture of the night's tragedy bore in upon him. He closed his eyes for an instant. He pressed a hand to his throbbing temple. God! It was a ghastly affair, after all, wasn't it? But it wasn't murder, he was sure. And it wasn't his fault, he was surer. Phillipson had brought it on himself. He deserved it, craven that he was—thus Tenterring justified himself.

The sheriff brought him back to his own situation.

"Gosh, man, you're as white as a sheet!" he exclaimed. "Y' ain't scairt of this, are you?"

"No," answered Tenterring weakly, "but it isn't pleasant to have a thing like this happen at your front door."

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"You're right, 'tain't," echoed Dunk. "And the strange thing about it is that y' didn't hear a thing of it. Ain't it now?"

The question revived all Tenterring's apprehensions—revived them with redoubled force. For hadn't the weapon that had brought death to Phillipson disappeared? And wouldn't there be a strenuous search for it? And when it was found, wouldn't it be found to bear his own initials? And wouldn't that, of course, lead to the suspicion that Tenterring himself had committed the murder? What a distracting maze it was! And here was this sheriff making things worse with his endless questions.

"Ain't it now?" the latter persisted.

"Oh, I don't know," Tenterring replied aimlessly. "We're pretty sound sleepers out here, Dunk."

"Gosh, a'mighty! I wish I could hit the hay as hard as that," grinned the sheriff.

The pleasantry helped restore Tenterring's equanimity. Then the robust official set him off in a new line of apprehension.

"See," Hildebrand exclaimed, suddenly dropping to his knees to examine the ground more closely, "ain't that peculiar now? The marks that a man was laying here 's plain enough." He pointed with one fat forefinger to the lines in the soft earth. "Here's his feet and here's his legs and here's his head and here's his shoulders. But see how heavy the marks are when you look where his hips was. Looks for all the world to me as if he was a-setting down on the ground when he was hit. Don't it now?"

Tenterring had to agree that the imprints did justify the sheriff's supposition.

"That's queer again, ain't it?" the latter went on, with renewed interest. "What could he 'a' been setting down on this damp ground for? Must be some explanation for that? What d'you suppose?"

Tenterring shook his head gravely.

"Blamed if I do either," puffed Dunk, as he balanced himself to his feet. "But it's mighty queer."

He looked at his companion thoughtfully for a moment. Tenterring irked inwardly at the inspection. He was further disturbed by the next announcement.

"Looks like this is goin' to be some mystery," the sheriff declared. "Bet you there'll be a swarm o' them city newspaper fellers out here before many hours. Shouldn't wonder if I'd hev to get a good detective or two from New York to give us a hand. Wouldn't want this not to be cleaned up, you know. People might remember it w'en nex' election comes round."

So, here was more trouble looming for Tenterring. Newspaper reporters and city detectives. A fine lot of publicity was coming. And he saw no way of shunting it without disclosing too much animus.

"Oh, this thing will solve itself in a few hours, Dunk. Don't get worried about it," Tenterring urged.

"I ain't a-worryin'—yet," returned the sheriff, smartly, "but it's a cinch this has got to be cleared up satisfactorily. Everybody in your set, sir, 'll be clamoring for action. They'll want somebody caught and punished. An' it's up to me to do the catchin'. Phillipson was a popular fellow in your circle. Can't forget that." He stopped and looked quizzically at his companion. Then he went on with the faintest approach to a grin: "Something of a lady killer, too, I've heard, eh?"

The sheriff's query came as an additional shock to Tenterring. It was plain to the latter now that the official mind had been busy with various other conjectures regarding the cause of Phillipson's taking off than the ones he had up to this point suggested.

"Oh, nothing more than the most of us, I guess," Tenterring answered shortly, as if to dismiss further discussion of the dreaded subject.

"Mebbe you didn't know that I once stopped him from teasing Bill Haight, the tailor's, daughter away from home." The sheriff's tongue rolled out the reminiscence with oily satisfaction. "And, say, there was a yarn about las' month that he was flirtin' around some married woman. But I never could get hold of the lady's name."

Tenterring went cold with dread and hot with anger. "Some married woman," he decided, was his own wife. It was hateful to think of—and he was satisfied again that Phillipson was dead. But his wife's name was still in danger. He would have to scheme to protect that further.

"Many a married woman's name has been bandied about unfairly," he finally replied.

"That's no lie. But I ain't taking it back that Phillipson was a smooth article with the women folks. And it's just as likely as not that we'll in the end find some pretty face at the bottom of this."

Tenterring could only shake his head negatively. The sheriff was so near to the truth of the tragedy that his companion could not trust himself to speak.

"Well, there doesn't appear to be anythin' more to do here just now. Guess I'd better be gettin' back to town." The sheriff started across the lawn toward his automobile which his chauffeur had drawn up close to Phillipson's runabout. Tenterring, half in fear, half in relief, followed him.

Near a clump of bushes Hildebrand suddenly paused to examine the ground. The turf had been trampled and there were faint marks of footprints. His companion noted with a frown that the sheriff had found the spot from which he had stalked Phillipson on the previous night.

"Looks like somebody'd been makin' a hiding-place of this, eh?" exclaimed Hildebrand. "Gosh, a'mighty, it's a wonder these things wouldn't make you feel kind o' creepy, Tenterring, happening right under your nose."

The man of the place emitted a dry, mirthless laugh. Then his eyes bulged as he watched the sheriff, after exploring various pockets, draw forth a little tape measure, slip awkwardly to one knee and proceed carefully to take the size of the well-defined footprints.

"Take 'em down, will you?" he requested. And Tenterring, to his surprise and dismay, found himself jotting down figures that he felt must inevitably connect himself with the tragedy of the night.

"Eleven inches long from toe to heel," dictated Hildebrand. "Three and a quarter inches across the broad of the sole. Two inches across the width of the heel. Got that?"

Tenterring nodded soberly.

The sheriff proceeded to measure several more of the imprints. They corresponded exactly with the measure of the one already set down.

"Only one man here, that's a cinch," declared Hildebrand. "Well, let's move over to my car. I think I'll be hiking back to town."

Tenterring felt relieved at this decision. He was glad to escape further questioning. He wanted a little while alone in which to think things over calmly and decide on a further course of action.

But he wasn't done with the sharp-eyed sheriff yet. Leaning against the veranda railing to light a cigar, Hildebrand exclaimed:

"By Jove, if there ain't more footmarks!"

He pointed to traces of mud along the floor of the veranda.

"Let's see where they start," he said, and he edged along the railing to the spot where Tenterring had vaulted over it on the previous night. "See," he went on, with a trace of enthusiasm, "whoever it was, climbed over about here. Let's see how these measure," and, for a fat man, he got over the railing with remarkable agility.

Again he applied the tape measure and again he directed his companion to make a note of the results.

"Eleven inches long," he dictated. "Three and a quarter inches across the sole. Two inches across the heel. And look," he chuckled, setting a forefinger close to the floor, "the fellow was wearing rubbers. You can see the little squares that correspond with those on the soles. Wearing rubbers, eh? That was to deaden the sound sure. He was stalking somebody, that's a cinch. Gosh! The scent's gettin' hot. Let's see where it leads."

Tenterring knew only too well. In dread he slowly followed the sheriff as he cautiously picked his way in the wake of the footprints across the veranda and directly to the window thru which the master had surreptitiously entered his own house.

"Well, well, well!" ejaculated Hildebrand. "Here's another sticker. These footprints all aim at this window, but none of them lead away from it. This guy must have got in thru here."

The sheriff tried the long, low window, but it did not give. Tenterring congratulated himself that he had taken the pains to lock it after his entrance.

"Sure you weren't robbed last night?" Dunk asked briskly.

Tenterring laughed joylessly.

"I've have heard of it before this, if I had been," he fenced.

"Well, you'd better look the place over carefully," suggested Hildebrand. "I can't figure this out at all." He scratched his head vaguely. "But I'm going to run back to town and see if anything has turned up there. I'll be back here soon to have a talk with the wife."

And Tenterring, gloomily watching the sheriff disappear down the road in his puffing car, kept muttering to himself:

"Will she tell or won't she?"

This strange story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Had the Piano.

There is a story told that some years ago the keeper of the lighthouse on Tory Island (an Englishman got married to a London girl, and his wife had, among other effects, a piano sent after her to her new home. By and by news reached the island that the instrument was on the mainland and two islanders were dispatched in a lugger to fetch it across. The lighthouse keeper and his wife were awaiting the arrival of the piano, which was to brighten the long winter evenings; but, to their disappointment, they saw the boat returning without the instrument.

"Where is the piano?" shouted the lighthouse keeper when the lugger had got within hailing distance.

"It's all right," replied one of the boatmen; "shure, we're towin' it behind us!"

* * *

Paying the Fee.

A young factory hand and his girl went to get married. They got as far as the church, when he found out he had not enough money to pay the wedding fee. The clergyman would not marry them, saying, "No money, no wedding."

So the girl asked would he wait till she went home for the money.

The clergyman said, "Yes."

In a little while the girl returned with the money and the knot was duly tied.

The girl now said to the clergyman:

"Can any one oppose our union?"

To which he replied:

"Nobody, my daughter. Heaven bless you!"

The girl said:

"Then there's the pawn ticket for your hat and coat, which I took from the vestry and pawned!"

Collapse of his reverence.

* * *

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Or, The Kidnaped Actress

By Willard E. Hawkins

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CHAPTER XII.

THE LETTER FILE.

"NO, I HAVEN'T seen the document," was my response to the first eager question of Belinda Irmengarde; "but I have made a discovery even more important."

"You look worn out," she exclaimed, with real anxiety. "What have you been doing?"

"Well, I haven't had any particular amount of sleep in the last twenty-four hours," I admitted; "but I could afford to stay up all night for the sake of knowing that the Searchlight people built up their factory on two varnish formulas that were stolen from me."

"Can you prove that?"

"Perhaps not; but there is some satisfaction in knowing it." I related my conversation with the assistant manager.

"Did you say they started the factory with fifty thousand dollars?"

"According to Mr. Kelsey."

I wondered why she asked the question.

Miss Irmengarde admitted that she had been doing a little private investigating and was half inclined to believe she had discovered a clew. She would say nothing more definite.

When I returned to the factory, Frank Kelsey met me with a long face.

Yes; Mr. Giles had returned. Evidently I had not read the morning papers.

It seemed that in attempting to make the run from New York in his automobile, Mortimer Giles, president and manager of the Searchlight Manufacturing Company, had been hurled from his car when the latter struck the railroad tracks at an unexpected angle, and was injured, perhaps seriously. The machine had sustained little damage, but Giles was brought home by his chauffeur in a terrible state. The latest bulletin received at the office contained the news that the manager had regained consciousness, but could not be considered out of danger.

It seemed as if the fates were conspiring to thwart my endeavor to sift matters.

"No further information about the letter?" I inquired.

"Sorry; not a thing. A systematic search has been made thru all the old files, but no trace of the correspondence has come to light."

The thought occurred to me that Mandeville had purloined it.

"Have you any records," I inquired, "of the time during which Stephen Mandeville acted as manager for the Quicklac Company?"

"Mandeville? That was before my time. However, I've heard Mr. Giles say he once placed such a man in charge, but that he proved inefficient. Two or three times, I know, he has been obliged to relate the circumstances, when other firms wrote asking for Mandeville's record."

"Then he is responsible for a rank injustice to a brilliant executive!" I blazed.

Kelsey looked shocked.

"That one circumstance gives me an unfavorable impression of your whole firm," I went on heatedly. "Tell me, Mr. Kelsey, where the Searchlight Company obtained the formula for its Granitoila compound?"

"That also was before my time."

"Could it have been evolved in the company's laboratory?"

"Hardly. Neither concern was large enough until recently, to justify a separate chemical department. You have no idea how the factory has grown within the past year."

"Then, Mr. Kelsey, you would oblige me very much by going thru the Searchlight files and ascertaining where that formula came from."

The assistant manager looked rather blank at this. If he had been an older man, he might have succeeded in putting me off; but I had been allowed already too many privileges in that office to be summarily treated now. Kelsey was a very pleasant, business-like young fellow, but his personality was negative.

"Have you thought," he protested, "what an endless task it will be to go thru all that correspondence?"

"It is important that we should do so."

With a sigh of resignation he led me down a winding stairway. The basement was filled with a miscellaneous assortment of the office junk that will accumulate in a big concern. The walls were lined with old filing cabinets and storage boxes. I began to realize that finding a certain sheet of paper in this heap of records would be rather a tough problem.

"You see, in the other matter, it was merely a case of going thru all the correspondence under the letter L," observed Kelsey; "but this time we haven't so much as a name to go by."

"That is exactly where I want you to begin now," I said. "Put your hand on the file containing correspondence for the old Searchlight Company. Then look and see whether my name appears."

Five minutes later, the assistant manager drew forth a neatly docketed folder, plainly marked in ink, "Londenbecker Corres."

The first letter in the folder was a carbon copy, dated a short time before the weird kidnaping adventure.

"Mr. Christopher Londenbecker:

"Dear Sir: Referring to our conversation of some time past, I am instructed by the directors to say that if you still have the varnish formula for sale, we would be pleased to take the matter up. Yours truly, MANAGER."

The second letter was the one which riveted my attention. It was dated three days after the other. The body was neatly typewritten on plain white paper, and it was signed with my name. Not only that, but the signature was in what I should have sworn was my own handwriting.

"Mr. L. J. Carson, Manager Searchlight Mfg. Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

"Dear Sir: It is with pleasure that I send the varnish formula as requested. I am convinced that it will give entire satisfaction. Nothing now on the market can claim to be its equal, and the raw materials are obtainable at low prices. Yours very truly,

"CHRIS LONDENBECKER."

The third letter was the copy of a mere formal announcement that the company was inclosing herewith a check in payment for my rights to the formula. The emotions aroused by this persual can be faintly imagined.

"By Jove, that's strange!" said Kelsey, staring at the outspread sheets. "You assert positively that you never wrote any such letter?"

"Never wrote it!" I choked forth. "Why, of course, I never wrote it."

"But—there's the signature," he protested. "Do you suppose it was forged?"

"Certainly it was! Not only was my name forged, but my mail was intercepted. Somebody got the check."

"Most peculiar," he repeated blankly. "Any idea who it could have been?"

"Any idea! At the very time when those letters were purported to have been written, I was kidnaped and imprisoned. And the man responsible for the whole business stole this and the other formula during my imprisonment."

Kelsey lacked imagination. He puzzled a good deal over this explanation, but the story only bewildered him. We returned to his office, where a clerk informed us that Mr. Giles had sent a request to have me visit him at his house that evening. I requested Kelsey to send word that I would be on hand.

CHAPTER XIII.

MR. GILES.

I FOUND the entire Giles household in a demoralized state, on my arrival. The accident apparently had not fostered a very amiable spirit in Mortimer Giles. The butler greeted my name with evident relief.

"If you will kindly step right up, sir, I—I think it will be best for all concerned. He has been—er—rather impatient, if I may say it, quite unlike himself."

A baleful eye, set like a glittering gem, in a mass of bandages, was the only feature actually visible of the injured man.

"Sit down!" roared the bandages. "McGillicuddy!"

"Yes, sir," responded the butler over my shoulder.

"I'm thru with you, understand? And see here!"

"Yes, sir."

"You go down below and stay down! D'y' hear? Stay down! Keep everybody else down. If I hear any one prowling around above stairs, it'll cost the whole bunch your places. After we get this thing settled up, I want a chance to sleep. Disconnect the doorbell and the telephone, and I'm not to be disturbed for anything short of a house afire. Understand!"

"Yes, sir," and the butler effaced himself with evident relief.

Mr. Giles paused for a moment, breathing heavily. When he again spoke, his voice was comparatively calm.

"Dirty bunch of thieving rascals, the whole outfit! They wait till a man's helpless, then harass the life out of him."

I ventured the suggestion that if he felt unequal to the interview, I could return on the morrow.

"Helno!" was the response. "Get this thing off my mind and settled; then I can have some rest—maybe. So you're Mr. Londenbecker?"

"That's my name." I then proceeded rather abruptly with the object of my visit: "Mr. Giles, have you any recollection of the circumstances attending the letter?"

"I'll tell you, near as I can remember. The whole thing took place by correspondence. Don't know what became of the letters. But the fellow had the goods, and I bought the formula. Bought several other formulas at that stage, but some of them didn't pan out. Quicklac made good right from the start."

"I'm rather glad to hear that, for I have every reason to believe that it was my formula—in fact, I'm sure it was. And not only that, but——"

"I know," he interrupted. "Kelsey

HOW I DARKENED MY GRAY HAIR

Lady Gives Simple Home Recipe That She Used to Darken Her Gray Hair.

For years I tried to restore my gray hair to its natural color with the prepared dyes and stains, but none of them gave satisfaction and they were all expensive. I finally ran onto a simple recipe which I mixed at home that gives wonderful results. I gave the recipe, which is as follows, to a number of my friends, and they are all delighted with it. To 7 ozs. of water add a small box of Barbo Compound, 1 oz. of bay rum and ¼ oz. of glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any drug store at very little cost. Use every other day until the hair becomes the required shade. It will not only darken the gray hair, but make it soft and glossy. It is not sticky or greasy and does not rub off.

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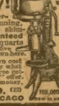

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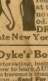

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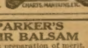

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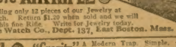

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If these danger signals are unheeded more serious results may be expected; kidney trouble in its worst form may steal upon you.

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Most people do not realize the alarming increase and remarkable prevalency of kidney disease. While kidney disorders are among the most common diseases that prevail, they are sometimes the last recognized by patients, who very often content themselves with doctoring the effects, while the original disease may constantly undermine the system.

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told me about it this afternoon. Looks queer. Dead ringer for your own signature, so he declared. Got any suspicions?"

"Yes," I admitted.

I repeated the story which already had nearly cost me my reputation for sanity and veracity. He took it, evidently with a grain of salt, but still seemed to consider that there was something back of my account.

"Now," I concluded, "you may believe as much as you like; but that is a true version of all that occurred up to the time when I awoke in the police station and found I could not make them believe my story."

He answered slowly: "No, Mr. Londenbecker; I do not consider that you are crazy. The whole thing sounds like a fantastic dream, but I cannot help feeling that you have assumed rather rashly that it was a hoax. I never heard of the strange sect of Nagarism; but there are more strange things on this earth today than many a man knows anything about. I am a globe trotter, and I know. It is barely possible that the claims of the Grand Vizier's secretary were true, even tho he may also have taken advantage of the opportunity to finance his undertaking by crooked methods."

I forebore to contradict him. Perhaps he was right. By nature I am skeptical and incredulous of anything out of the ordinary.

"Have you any reason," he continued, "to believe that the men of the party are in this vicinity?"

I answered this by telling of the kidnaping. "I am satisfied," I added, "that the Englishman who contrived the abduction of Signorina de Rolleri was the so-called secretary in disguise. And they were suspected of having made the run to Philadelphia."

"H'm! You have been his victim once—it would be advisable for you to run no risk of getting into his clutches again. Do you carry a firearm?"

Upon my response in the negative, he added:

"In the slide drawer of the desk you'll find a little automatic that I keep loaded for emergencies. There's no knowing what may happen. Take it along—I will feel safer in knowing that you have it. And I have arranged that you are to be taken to your hotel in my machine. You will find it waiting in front. Depend upon it, Mr. Londenbecker, I am with you in every effort that can be made to trace down this matter, and to see that you receive just recompense for the suffering I have innocently caused you."

The interview certainly had been comforting. I found the machine waiting, as Mr. Giles had said it would be, and with a sense of satisfaction at the feel of the automatic in my pocket, I gave the chauffeur the name of the hotel where I was stopping.

During the greater part of our ride in the bracing air, I made no attempt to communicate with him. He had informed me, in answer to my question, before we started, that another "guy" had guided the machine from New York on the night of his employer's accident. He seemed very reticent.

It was not until we had gone some distance that I became aroused to a sense of something wrong. Little as I knew my way about the tangle of Philadelphia streets, I felt sure that we were not making for the center of town. Why, we were actually in the sparsely settled suburbs, and speeding rapidly away from what few habitations there were in sight when I made the discovery!

My first impulse naturally was to raise a protest. But I had learned a few things in recent months. One of them was that it was better to surprise than to be surprised. Very calmly I drew the automatic from my pocket and leaned forward until I had it directed full toward the chauffeur's brain cavity. If he turned his head a little, he would be gazing into the barrel.

"Will you kindly bring the machine to a stop?" I requested in a low, pleasant tone.

He glanced around—the effectiveness of the shock was evidenced by a twist of the steering wheel which almost swerved us into the gutter. Without a moment's delay, he brought the car to a standstill.

He was remarkably self-contained. Tho he obeyed, he did not cringe or try to explain. In fact, he sat entirely motionless, awaiting further orders.

"Turn around, and drive back," I instructed sternly. "And no capers."

He seemed willing to obey, but the engine had gone dead.

"I'll have to get out and look her over," he commented. "You c'n keep that thing leveled at me, if you want, boss."

"That is exactly what I shall do. But before you take any steps, I should like to know upon whose orders you are work. Did Mr. Giles tell you to bring me out here—or anywhere, except to my lodgings?"

"I ain't no more Mr. Giles' shovver than you are, boss."

"I don't understand."

"You see, it was easy enough to go up to the guy while he was waitin' there, and to promise to take his place while he goes off with a skirt what wants to make a date with him. I was ready to pay him his price for desertin'. But she had him goin' so he give me a fiver to hold down the wheel."

"And your employers—who are they?" I could not forego the pleasure of congratulating myself that I had kept my eyes open and handled this affair pretty neatly.

"I can't tell you a thing, boss—honest I can't. It was a guy, that's all I knows, and he told me if I'd work the gag and get you out here a ways, it'd be worth twenty-five bucks. I hadn't ought to done it, mister—but when a guy's strapped, and got a family dependent on him——"

"I don't intend to hold you responsible," I interrupted. "It's the men who hired you that I'm after. Where were you to take me?"

"Up the road about a mile furder."

"Very well. Fix the mechanism and turn around. If you obey instructions, I'll see that you do not reap a severe penalty for tonight. Understand?"

"I'll do it, boss." He climbed out with evident willingness to avoid the close proximity of the revolver.

The plan I had formulated was to run back to a telephone station, secure police headquarters, then, when the officers had arrived, to make the chauffeur take us to the place where the trap was to be sprung. It might be possible to effect the capture of the whole gang.

The chauffeur gave a cursory glance at the engine, tinkered a little, to no purpose that I could see, then suddenly turned and ran back down the road at an easy trot.

"So long, boss," he called ironically.

I was petrified for an instant at his treachery and daring. I fired the revolver three times—not at him, but in the air, hoping to frighten him. He continued to run, without either glancing around or increasing his speed.

I was thoroly aroused. He might outrun me, but at least I would give him a hard chase. Leaping from the car, I plunged after him. Something black and suffocating descended over my head. I struck out furiously, and the revolver went off a couple of times, under my spasmodic clutch, but my struggles were quickly over. Whoever it was that had seized me from behind—probably having ridden out with us concealed beneath the hood at the rear—had all the advantage, both in the matter of strength and preparedness.

I was tossed into the tonneau of the machine, bound, blindfolded, and helpless. What a simpleton's part I had played—just when I was congratulating myself on my cleverness!

CHAPTER XIV.

MY CAPTORS AGAIN.

A JUMBLE of shrieking motors, warning honks, and innumerable jolts of which I received the full benefit, tossed about as I was like a sack of meal on the floor, constitute my next impressions.

An indefinite period of this, then the machine came to a stop. My captor—or captors as they now appeared—hustled me forth with scant ceremony; I felt the change of atmosphere from outside freshness to a close interior; we descended three flights of stairs; a couple of doors left their impress on projecting parts of my anatomy; then came the process of unfastening the bonds.

If you have ever viewed the interior of a prison cell, I need not describe the place revealed by the removal of the blindfold. Floor, walls, and apparently the ceiling, were of solid concrete. A narrow cotlike affair, on which I had been deposited, was the only suggestion of comfort. There were no windows. The half-open door was thick and lined with galvanized iron.

I could have made a shrewd guess at the identity of my captors. I was not surprised when I found myself in the presence of the pink insignia of Nagarusalem. Tatsagawa glowered at me from the door of my cell. His superior regarded me in silence, while I made a quick appraisement of the quarters.

I should have felt a fury of indignation; but I was too fagged, mentally and physically, more than to demand the meaning of my confinement in this dungeon.

"A good guess," responded the man whom I knew as secretary to Prince Muggleton. "It is a dungeon."

"But why am I here? Aren't you satisfied with the damage you've already done to my career?"

"You are here," he responded, "because you haven't sense enough not to meddle in other people's affairs. You seem determined to make trouble for the envoys of Nagarusalem. Therefore, it has been thought best to put you where you can do the least harm—in this specially prepared place of confinement."

"It seems to me," I replied pointedly, "that this attitude is a practical admission of your part in the theft of my two varnish formulas—for that is the only score on which I have been making trouble."

"I have no intention of denying that accusation," he replied composedly.

At this I sat up. "Then you'll recompense me in full," I began, "or I'll see that——"

Tatsagawa approached menacingly, as I shook a threatening finger under the Grand Vizier's nose. As I desisted, suddenly aware of the uselessness of threats, Muggleton took up the thread in even, unemotional tones.

"Let me be frank. I needed ready cash at the time, and took the opportunity of obtaining it in that manner. Will a cash repayment satisfy you?"

"Not by a million miles! The only thing that would give me absolute, unalloyed satisfaction, would be to see you locked up for thirty years in a place as near like this as possible."

He frowned. "Would that retrieve the error?"

"Possibly not. But it will——" I paused a moment, considering. "Do you mean that you are actually willing to right the wrong—to recompense everybody concerned, and clear my name?"

"As far as possible, yes. I would rather get rid of you in that way than by confining you in this uncomfortable place."

"But there's a string attached to it?"

"We will come to that point later."

I reflected. It would do no harm to test his sincerity.

"Very well," I replied slowly. "Here is what you can do: You can reimburse Stephen Mandeville, the manager who lost his position thru your dirty work, to the extent of a full year's salary; and you can reimburse the Peerless factory for the worth of the stolen varnish formulas, on their guarantee to replace him in charge. The young woman whom Conroy was to have married lost a cool fifty thousand as a consequence of his abduction. She also should be reimbursed. And the final demand I would make is that you release all of us, including the Signorina de Rolleri."

"You mean our gracious Queen Ethalind?" he responded in some surprise.

"If you insist on calling her that. It would be idle for you to claim that you are not the supposed Englishman who kidnaped the star."

He did not reply to this, but reverted to my demands.

"You have asked nothing for yourself," he said.

"Convince Mandeville that I did not write the letters."

He pondered for a few moments, his brows puckered gloomily.

"What you ask," he finally observed, "is beyond reason; I am not wealthy. But I will do this much: I will indemnify Mandeville to the extent of a year's

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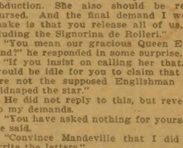

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This picture shows one of our friends driving an automobile like the one we are going to give away. In this picture there are six partly hidden faces which it will be lots of fun for you to find. It is not so easy to find the faces in this picture, but by close search and by twisting and turning the picture around, they will be revealed to you. Can you find them?

YOU WILL WIN A PRIZE
if you do; try it, don't give up. It will pay you. When you have found four of the faces, mark each with a cross (X), cut out the picture and mail it to us. When your answer is received we will send you a prize which we know you will appreciate, and it will be a big surprise to you. We will also make you a present of 2,000 free Auto votes, and tell you all about this splendid automobile, touring car or roadster, which we are going to give away. We will give away many other prizes for just a little effort.

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salary and set the matter before him in its true light. As for the girl, well, possibly I can promise her a cash recompense of five thousand dollars. Isn't that better than the mere satisfaction of seeing me in jail?"

"What about the Signorina—Queen Ethalind, or whatever you call her?"

"That is a more complicated matter," he responded. "The first and foremost consideration with me is the welfare of her majesty. In our former meeting you gained considerable insight into the state secrets of Nagarusalem. Some of the things I found it necessary to tell you were not exactly true, but in the main, the situation stood just about as I outlined."

"Particularly," was my sarcastic interruption, "in the case of the Grand Vizier."

"There is a slight discrepancy on that point," owned the secretary, without changing countenance. "Because of the fact that you and Mr. Conroy might have made it difficult for me to carry out the program, it seemed advisable to—er—play you off, one against the other. At the same time, this obviated the necessity for producing the real Grand Vizier. Prince Muggleton occupied a room in the same house; but the entire transaction, tho necessary, was very distasteful to him. My orders were to call upon him for assistance only in case of actual emergency."

I gasped, but an instinctive desire to hear what further he would say caused me to hold my tongue. I remembered Miss Irmengarde's insistent demand. I could not—tho matters were difficult to explain otherwise—take his story seriously. But since the man appeared to assume that I believed in his mythical kingdom, I would watch for an opportunity to mention her conclusions.

He went on: "The necessity for performing the royal marriage by proxy was caused by the disappearance of her highness, Queen Ethalind."

"Then she, too, was a prisoner in that house?"

"Hardly," was the deprecating answer. "But during our residence in America, her majesty had an opportunity to visit the opera. Our beloved Queen was fascinated, dazzled, by the display, tho neither his highness, Prince Muggleton, nor myself considered for a moment that she entertained serious thoughts on the subject. But when the time arrived for the final rites, her majesty had disappeared, leaving only a note informing us that a stage career appealed to her more than her throne. It was a heartrending discovery."

"So you rushed matters thru to a climax," was my guileless response; "then doped us up with knockout drops and shoved us out of the way."

"Exactly. Then, while Prince Muggleton remained in this country, frantically searching for his loved one, I returned to my own people. Their verdict was that we must either recover the Queen or suffer death. You may imagine, then, with what eagerness we have been looking for her.

"Our mistake was in searching among the lower ranks of theatrical life. It did not occur to us that a young woman, unversed in the ways of the stage, could rise suddenly to eminence. The fact is that, immediately on her escape, a well-known manager induced her to sign a three years' contract. So her majesty first appeared before the public as a full-fledged star.

"Your friend Conroy's name, coupled with the newspaper details, gave us our first intimation of the truth. There was no time to be lost; for if you succeeded in making the affair public, our Queen would be disgraced in the eyes of the world. Hence—the kidnaping, which was necessary and unavoidable, from our point of view."

It was an ingenious explanation, I was forced to admit that—almost convincing, with his manner of telling it.

"And what is my connection with it all?" I inquired.

"Merely this: You have made certain requests. I will agree to do all in my power to grant them, merely asking in return that you indemnify us against the consequences of our past operations."

"You have persuaded the Queen to return to Nagarusalem?" was my ironic query.

"Quite the contrary. She has convinced us that it would be sheer cruelty to tear her away from her chosen life. Prince Muggleton is prepared to sacrifice all his ambitions rather than cause her unnecessary suffering."

"Then why——"

He interrupted to explain: "Since it means death for us to return without the Queen, we have no choice except to remain in America. You are the stumbling-block. Will you swear on your word of honor never to reveal the identity of her majesty, never to recognize Tatsagawa, or myself, or to seek our acquaintance under any circumstances, if I agree to your conditions?"

I stared at him almost with admiration.

"I have the honor," I observed, "to call you the most accomplished falsifier in this or any other country."

"Perhaps you would like to talk with your friend, Conroy, and with her majesty, the Queen?"

"Very much."

Without more ado, my pink-whiskered guide rose and led the way from the cell. We passed down a short, dark corridor and entered a large, scantily furnished apartment of concrete, like the cell, and like it minus windows, tho there was a sort of barred opening in the roof, evidently for ventilation. This room contained a table, three chairs, and was lighted by a single electric bulb.

I could not help wondering at the completeness of this little private jail. My guide condescended to enlighten me.

"As you see, we were prepared for every emergency. This underground prison has been built for several months. Its location is unknown to the authorities."

He stepped out into the passage, where his voice was audible for a moment in conversation with Tatsagawa. I sank into a chair by the table and remained for a few moments buried in thought. At the sound of returning footsteps, I sprang up.

"Look here!' I demanded. "If I pledge my word to carry out all your conditions, what assurance have I that——"

Then I stopped short. The man who stood in the doorway, staring at me as if I had been a ghost, was Roger Conroy.

CHAPTER XV.

THE QUEEN'S CAPTIVE.

YOU—here!" he exclaimed in stupefaction.

Our hands met in a clasp all the more fervent because the meeting took place under conditions so mutually adverse.

"I thought it was all a bluff on his part. Didn't for a moment suppose he'd let me talk with you," I answered.

Conroy looked not greatly the worse for his imprisonment. His clothes were somewhat bedraggled, but his expression suggested contentment, rather than the reverse, with a captive's life.

My first question went to the heart of the problem that was agitating my thoughts.

"What do you make of this thing?" I demanded. "This already prepared prison—and everything connected with it?"

"Simply," responded Conroy, "that these fellows have been getting ready for just such an emergency. Their methods are the methods of the Middle Ages; but we must admit that they are effective, even if a trifle crude."

"What have they done with the Signorina?"

He stared. "Oh, you mean the Queen! Why, she's here, *too*. The royal suite lies next to this part; but you can only reach it by a special passage, and the door opens with a secret combination, like a safe. We have frequent long chats together. It's not so bad for me—knowing that she is well treated, and all that; but it is a tough situation for the poor girl. I'm mighty glad they got hold of you at last."

"Thanks for your good wishes," I responded dryly. "Have you considered how we are going to escape?"

The surprise on his face was almost funny.

"Why, there's nothing to it. All they require of us is a pledge to keep our mouths shut. That is all they ask."

"In other words," I retorted, with irritation, "you are so infatuated that you let them pull the wool over your eyes without a protest."

Conroy flushed angrily. "Look here! Are you going to queer the whole thing by your pig-headedness? All they've been waiting for is to get hold of you so that this business could be cleared up. And now, you——"

"Conroy," I said, looking him straight in the eyes, "do you believe for a moment that the man will keep his word?"

"Of course! Why should he go to all the trouble of dragging such a promise from us otherwise? Why, I tell you——"

"Excuse me, gentlemen."

The secretary had entered unobtrusively thru a second door—evidently that leading to the royal prison suite. His countenance was perfectly impassive, tho no doubt he had been listening to all we said. He was followed by a vision which converted Conroy's vindictive glare into a smile of worshipful imbecility.

Regal in manner, despite the evidences of agitation and tears upon her countenance, the actress—or Queen—whatever she might be—had never appeared more beautiful. After all, I could scarcely blame Conroy, even tho, to me, her beauty appeared just a trifle too classic and cold for everyday association.

Recognizing me, she uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Madam," I exclaimed, upon the im-

Nuxated Iron to Make New Age of Beautiful Women and Vigorous Iron Men

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NEW YORK, N. Y.—Since the remarkable discovery of organic iron, Nuxated Iron or "Fer Nuxate," as the French call it, has taken the country by storm, it is conservatively estimated that over three million persons annually are taking it in this country alone. Most astonishing results are reported from its use by both physicians and laymen. So much so that doctors predict that we shall soon have a new age of far more beautiful, rosy-cheeked women and vigorous iron men.

Dr. King, a New York physician and author, when interviewed on the subject, said: "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron. Pallor means anemia. Anemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone; the brain fags and the memory fails and often they become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

"In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated cornmeal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked, are responsible for another grave iron loss.

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Dr. Sauer, who has studied abroad in great European medical institutions, said: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple nuxated iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver, heart trouble, etc. The real and true cause which started their disease was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by a lack of iron in the blood.

"Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with the blood pressure of a boy of twenty and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact, a young man he really was, notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—Nuxated Iron had filled him with renewed life. At thirty he was in bad health; at forty-six he was care worn and nearly all in. Now at fifty after taking nuxated iron a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth. Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good. You don't get the strength out of it, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well, you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this, after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate, or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children, is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

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Sig. Two after the meals
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Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques another New York physician, said: "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most remarkable and wonderfully effective remedy."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron, which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases, is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion as well as for nervous, run-down conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in nuxated iron, that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron, and increase their strength 200 per cent or over in four weeks' time, provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

pulse of the moment. "we have been informed that if we agree to certain conditions, you, as well as ourselves, will be released from this very uncomfortable situation. I should like to hear a true version of the matter from your lips."

Her agitation was evident. The eyes of the secretary studiously avoided her face, altho it seemed to me she looked toward him for enlightenment.

"I—it is true," she faltered, "that you can only help me by doing as he says. The situation seems to be—seems to be that unless you make these promises, it will be in his power to hold us captive—to keep me from the stage—indefinitely."

With that she looked at Conroy, and from her expression I began to feel that his affair was progressing rather well. But, on the other hand, her manner of speech was evasive with regard to the main issue. One must never forget that the little witch was an actress in every fiber of her being.

"That satisfies me perfectly," said Conroy; and he looked at me with a triumphant expression, as if to indicate that my suspicions had been proved groundless.

"Well," I retorted, "it doesn't satisfy me."

The impulse to hurl Miss Irmengarde's bombshell returned. She implied that something unexpected would result. I addressed the secretary:

"That disguise of yours is a little too thin."

He retreated a step and moistened his lips without removing his eyes from my face.

"Disguise! Are you crazy?"

"What if I should say that you are none other than Prince Muggleton, the Grand Vizier, yourself?"

At this her majesty gave a little hysterical cry, and the secretary stared at me open-mouthed.

"Perhaps," I continued, for it would do no harm to carry the thing to a limit, "you may recognize the name of Belinda Irmengarde, a countrywoman of yours."

He collapsed into a chair. "No," he gasped. "Never heard of her. A countrywoman of—of mine?"

I followed up the advantage.

"Not only that, but a member of the secret service corps of Nagarusalem and a Daughter of the Sacred Shrine, who wears the emblematic pink side-whiskers. You can probably guess her purpose in visiting this country."

The Grand Vizier collapsed even deeper into the chair. His face was ashen gray, his voice a mere echo.

"The pink side-whiskers! Purpose in visiting this country," he repeated blankly. "No, I can't guess—— Did you—did you——"

"What should be her purpose, except to tell the Queen that the edict compelling her to marry the Grand Vizier had been withdrawn? Ha!" I exclaimed theatrically, as he sank another notch lower in the chair, "you didn't know that! I have the honor to inform you, however, that you have been deprived of your rank, and that your name is infamous thruout the length and breadth of your native island. For once you overreached yourself, Prince Muggleton."

This latter burst of oratory was slightly imaginative; but I threw it in for good measure, since my speech had such a remarkably paralyzing effect on the man to whom it was addressed.

I glanced at the Queen. Her expression was only less stunned than that of the Grand Vizier.

"Who—who is this secret service woman?" queried he, in a faint, scarcely audible tone.

"A Daughter of the Shrine," I repeated, fully enjoying the sensation I had managed to stir up, and almost coming to believe the story myself. "A mighty pleasant little lady, I must say, in spite of her devotion to pink burnsides."

"And she is—where? In this city?"

I nodded.

The Grand Vizier sprang to his feet.

"Great Heavens!" he exclaimed. "It's impossible. It's—it can't be so! In the name of time—what——"

He choked back the flow of incoherent sentences, gulped two or three times, then stared wildly about the room.

His glance fell upon the Queen and Conroy. The latter had taken advantage of the general excitement to place a protecting arm around his bewildered divinity.

"Go! Go to your rooms!" gulped the secretary. "Go, every one of you. I want time—time to think this out!"

He waved his arm helplessly at Tatsagawa. In a moment the Queen had disappeared thru the door leading to her apartments, while Conroy and I were being hustled by the Jap, unceremoniously, down the narrow passage leading to our cheerless cells.

This mysterious story will be concluded in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

Gilt-Edged Security

By Edgar White

"I CAN let you have the—the money, Mr. Graffton," said the girl, shyly. And then, as tho she had asked a favor: "If you will take it."

The middle-aged man in seedy clothes looked at her in bewilderment. Sam Graffton, with the gloom of night on his face, had shrunk out of the offices where he was a low-salaried clerk, and was about to step in the elevator, when Daisy Trueheart, the boss' private stenographer, timidly touched him on the shoulder, and made the amazing offer to the most notorious borrower in the big building.

"Why, why, Miss Daisy," he said, with pathetic emotion, "I—I wasn't thinking of asking you for any——"

"I know you weren't," she graciously interrupted, "but I—you must pardon me—I overheard you talking to Mr. Thompson, the superintendent, this morning. You see my desk was close and I couldn't help it. I thought he was real mean about it!" and the dark brown eyes sparkled with anger.

Miss Daisy was a country product, and had been with the firm only six months. Graffton, who seemed to be treated with contempt by every one else in the office, was hungry for company in that busy hive, and once or twice he had done little favors for her, and had always spoken to her kindly. She had quickly observed that the balance of the force merely tolerated him as a sort of old family dog that was in the way, but which they didn't like to shoot, and her rustic soul went out in sympathy to him.

"Seventy-five dollars!" he muttered, thinking she might not have heard him mention the prodigious amount he had to have.

She nodded pleasantly. "I have it in the Valley Exchange Bank, and if you will go back into the office with me I can write you a check in a minute. Will that be enough?"

The borrower gasped. Enough? Why, she talked like she might have a million on tap! In truth she had just $78 saved up from her six months' work, and her question was merely a naive bluff to make him think it would be no sacrifice. And then she was terribly proud of that bank account, Miss Daisy was. When she left the town where the tinkle of cowbells and the evening musicale by the frogs was the accompaniment of her dreams, her father had reminded her that she would be calling on him for cash to settle with the landlady and for clothes before half a year was up. And she had the laugh on him with her little deposit book.

Graffton meekly followed her back into the main office, where Miss Daisy picked up a blank and briskly wrote out her check for $75 on the Valley Exchange Bank. He looked at her with fascinating interest, almost veneration. It was because he had written a $75 check on a bank where he had no money that made it highly important for Graffton to have $75 in real cash to deposit by nine the next morning.

Miss Daisy, in her businesslike way, blotted the check and smilingly handed it over to her hard-up fellow employe. Graffton picked up a sheet of paper and began writing a note.

"What's that?" she asked curiously.

"My note—evidence of the obligation," he told her.

"Fiddlesticks!" she laughed, and tearing the note up she threw the pieces in the wastebasket.

"Miss Daisy," he said, and there was a quiver about his pale lips, "this has saved me—I can't tell you just how—and I'll give you my solemn word of honor that you shall have it back by the 15th of next month—every cent of it!"

"You're entirely welcome, Mr. Graffton," declared the young woman, who was really pleased to do the favor, "and I hope it will help you over the bad place."

There was a noise, and both glanced quickly around, but saw no one. The noise was made by Master Cricketts, the office boy, who had returned from a hurried lunch to ascertain what had happened to the "Cowboy Queen," whom he had left on the very brink of a precipice when the demands of commerce had forced him to close the broad pages at eight that morning. Cricketts was in an alcove behind a bookcase, unseen, but an intensely interested listener. The noise was occasioned by his trying to suppress a laugh when he heard Graffton at his old trick of borrowing.

Before quitting time that afternoon everybody in the office knew that the impecunious Graffton had "touched" the boss' country-bred stenographer for a loan, and got it. And they felt like taking Graffton by the coat collar and tossing him out of one of the twentieth-story windows.

Joseph Thompson, the chief of the office force, an active, quick-talking man of 40, called Miss Daisy to his private room that evening as she was leaving.

"I understand you loaned some money to Mr. Graffton?"

Startled at finding the matter discovered, the girl turned red, but as candor was one of her characteristics, she replied:

"That is true, Mr. Thompson, but I'm surprised that any one should know it."

"We have a way of finding out what happens in these offices," returned the chief. "How much did you loan him?"

The girl bit her lips. "It seems to me, Mr. Thompson, that is my business."

"I am only asking it for your own good," he went on more gently. "If you don't wish to tell me you don't have to. I only asked because I thought I might find a way to make him give it back to you."

"I'll trust Mr. Graffton to return it when he is thru with it," declared the girl, with dignity.

The chief eyed her curiously. Most of Graffton's victims had come to him with complaints, while here was a person who seemed to be proud that she was a victim. He was inclined to stop right there, when he recalled that she was from the country, and that it would only be fair to tell her some things.

"That man Graffton is a professional borrower," declared the chief, trying to overcome something of the embarrassment caused him by the girl's scornful eyes. "He's just a worn-out clerk—a copyist—a pensioner of the office. We keep him here because he's been with the firm so long the boss does not want to see him starve. He's always hard up—been that way for years. Every man in the office holds his note or watch or chain or something as security. The bookkeeper loaned him $5 on his overcoat, and he had to go thru the winter without one because he wouldn't save enough to redeem it. What he does with his money I don't know—maybe he plays poker or the races. Anyhow, he never has a cent, and whatever you loaned him you might as well make up your mind to lose. I'm simply speaking about this to you so you won't be guilty of any such foolishness again," and the chief looked piously up at the ceiling.

"Thank you very much, Mr. Thompson," said Miss Daisy, "but I am not at all uneasy about my money. Is that all you wanted with me?"

"That's all," and the chief was so angry at the way she took his well-meant advice that he felt almost that she deserved to lose her money.

"The little goose!" he muttered. "If she hadn't put on her 'lady queen' manners I might have made that old panhandler give her back her money. But I guess he's blown it in by now."

On the first of the month a more serious matter was engrossing the attention of the office. The Valley Exchange Bank, in which most of the employes of the company kept their money, failed, and there were practically no assets to pay the customers even a portion of their deposits.

That evening Miss Daisy couldn't resist the temptation to fire a shot at the chief who had berated her bad judgment.

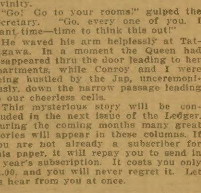
"If I hadn't loaned that money to Mr.

Important Letters From Women in Illinois

Mrs. Wm. Blackburn, who lives at 435 North 14th St., Murphysboro, Ill., says: "When I began taking Dr. Pierce's medicines I was just a nervous wreck, I could hardly be on my feet. While not able to work, I tried to keep up. I was recommended to use 'Favorite Prescription' and I took three bottles. I began to get better and when the treatment was finished I was much stronger and better able to work. The medicine was fine; easy to take and fully satisfactory."

Mrs. Alice Shelton, of 824 N. 8th St., Quincy, Ill., also says: "Last year I was troubled with dizzy spells brought on by woman's weakness. I stated my case to my druggist and he advised me to try Pierce's Favorite Prescription. I bought one bottle but that was all I found it necessary to take. It not only cured me of the dizziness but also strengthened me in every way. I think it a splendid medicine and am glad that the druggist recommended it to me."

Mrs. Wm. Strickland, residing at 110 South Center St., Joliet, Ill., states: "When I was in need of a woman's tonic, the druggist recommended Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. I took it steadily. I gained in weight and strength and my health was so much improved that I have not needed any medicine of the kind since. I am glad to speak words of praise for 'Favorite Prescription'."



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Get Favorite Prescription today—either in liquid or tablet form—from your druggist if you want to better your physical condition speedily. It is a wonderful prescription prepared only from nature's roots and herbs, with no alcohol to falsely stimulate and no narcotic to wreck the nerves. Ingredients on wrapper. —Advertisement.

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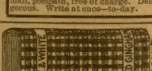

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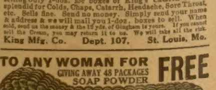

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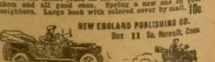

Grafton," she said, "it would have been lost."

"As far as you are concerned, Miss Daisy," he replied, "you were scheduled to lose anyway—either thru the bank failure or your friend Graffton. I don't see that it makes any difference."

"I'll have my money back by the 15th," she loyally declared.

"Look here, Miss Daisy," said Thompton, reaching for a large envelope in a lower drawer of his desk. "Here are five notes—see his signature—for money loaned that fellow, and he's never even paid the interest on one of them. Every man in the office has some of the same sort of promise. What did he give you?"

"His word," she replied simply.

"Huh! If he ever got anything we got evidence to attach. But you—you haven't even a scrap of paper!"

At noon of the 15th, as Miss Daisy was leaving the building to go to lunch, Graffton came running toward her. There was a slight abrasion over the right eye, and he looked out of order even a little more than usual.

"Miss Daisy," he said, in a voice showing agitation, "step over here just a minute, please," and he led her to one side of the passage, where there were no people. There, with some nervousness, he produced some bills from a large book.

"It's what you loaned me," he said, talking fast, "seventy-five dollars. I'm mightily obliged to you. I hope it hasn't put you out any?" and he glanced furtively about.

"Not a bit, Mr. Graffton," she smiled. "You did me a good turn by borrowing it."

He stared at her, but his thoughts seemed to be somewhere else.

"The bank where my money was failed while you had it," she explained, "and but for that I would have lost it. So I'm really under obligations to you."

Feeling that his evident embarrassment was due to his sensitiveness at having borrowed money from her, she was trying to convince him that he had really done her a favor for the reasons indicated, but he appeared to be anxious to get back to his work or something, so she extended her hand:

"I'm going to leave for home this afternoon for a few days' visit with my folks," she said. "I hope you-all will get along all right in the office. Good-by."

He took her hand.

"God bless you!" he muttered. "I'm glad I did it," and as he moved away from her he slunk thru a side passage, glancing about as tho he were trying to avoid some one. At the entrance he looked up and down street, and then——

"Here's our man, officer! Arrest him!"

The command was given by a tall man wearing a broad-brimmed straw hat and long outer coat. In his hand he waved a cotton umbrella frantically, as if he wanted to bring it down on somebody's head

In the police court that afternoon Sam Graffton was formally arraigned on the charge of stealing from one Jeremiah Jenkins of Smithville a pocketbook containing upwards of $100 and divers other things. The clerk laid a pocketbook on the judge's desk.

"Some unknown man left that here this morning," he said. "See if it's the one the gentleman has lost."

Jenkins pounced on the book and hurriedly opened it. Then he put on his specs and began to sort out the contents.

"There's $75 gone!" he cried. "This thief stole my money while I was buying a new valise—I pulled out my pocketbook and he grabbed it," and he pointed an accusing finger at Graffton. The judge looked at the prisoner.

"Got a lawyer?" he asked.

"No, sir," replied Graffton.

"Want one?"

"No, sir."

"You heard what this man said?"

"Yes, sir."

"Guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty."

The judge was a young man, and he saw that Graffton was different from the line of crooks that filed before him every day.

"Were you ever arrested before?" he asked.

"No, sir."

"Ever steal before?"

"No, sir."

"What made you do it this time?"

"I had to have the money."

"All say that," reminded the judge

"Well, it's so in my case. You see I had borrowed $75 from a young woman and had given her gilt-edged security."

"What do you mean by gilt-edged security?" asked the judge

Something like an electric contact seemed to stiffen the seedily-dressed man standing before the court. Looking the judge squarely in the eye, he answered clearly:

"My word of honor, sir!"

❧ ❧ ❧

THE MODERN MAN.

"I am afraid I don't understand the modern man," Loretta sighed, as she looked over her mail. "He is a problem."

"You speak as if you had been a member of the social sets before the flood," declared her brother, "and had come to pay the present century a little visit. What has the modern man done now?"

"You don't know young Mr. Peck," Loretta said dreamily. "But he's not so awfully young, either. I have met him every once in so often at week-end parties and at a dinner or two. He is neither wealthy nor handsome, and I liked him in a mild sort of way—the way one likes a hundred men one meets."

"You have a large acquaintance. By the way, does the modern man understand you?"

"Don't make fun of me," Loretta said, severely. "I will not allow it. Well, about eight weeks ago I met Mr. Peck at a dinner over at Mabel's. The man on the other side of me was busy talking to somebody else, so I just had to listen to Mr. Peck."

"Don't apologize," murmured her brother. "No excuse is necessary in a case of that sort when you know the gentleman in question."

"Well, you don't know him," Loretta retorted. "All the evening he talked about the kind of girl that he would like if he should find her. He called the modern woman thoughtless and luxury-loving. He said she cared nothing for home life and the higher things of today."

"Complimentary to you."

"He wasn't thinking of me," Loretta said, scornfully. "He was just so earnest that he had to tell somebody. He said that appearance, as far as beauty went, had nothing to do with the matter. He liked style, of course, but style meant not being fashionable but having an air. He said the present fashions made him sick at heart, and he sometimes wondered what had become of the sweet women like his mother and his grandmother. He declared that insincerity and a strong desire for display in order that one might be regarded as a personage in her circle had made the modern woman a ridiculous and pathetic fashion plate who was even unable to pick up her handkerchief without a catastrophe."

"I am afraid he was no gentleman," Loretta's brother said severely. "Why didn't he pick it up for her?"

"You know what he meant. Don't be foolish!"

"What else did he say in his own eloquent way?"

"He said the use of rouge had become so common that one was growing discouraged at the scarcity of real complexions. He said women wanted to seem brilliant and dashing, and were apt to be only silly——"

"Did you rise and bow your thanks?"

"That they cultivated those who would help them in their onward march toward position and joined clubs and societies only because such things forced them forward."

"You must have been unusually well informed about the members of your sex by the time the ice cream came along," her brother said. "Doesn't he know any goodhearted, well meaning women, young or old?"

"Oh, he said that a man loved his wife, was devoted to his mother and sometimes—note that—sometimes was fond of his sister, but laughed at the rest of womankind."

"Why didn't you crush him with your scorn?"

"He was really a nice man," Loretta said, with spirit. "I found him very entertaining and it wasn't until afterward that I realized the drift of all he said."

"It would have taken anybody some time to grasp his views if what you have repeated is only a sort of summary."

"Oh, he said lots more," Loretta said, quickly. "I haven't done him justice, either. He said it all so well and was so interesting. I haven't told you one-half of all he said about homes and the fireside and the gentle influence of a real woman. He was certainly charming."

"The past tense makes me sad," declared her brother. "Is he, perchance——"

"Married, yes!" Loretta said blithely. "Here are his cards. Married a girl he had known five weeks. She's Daisy Tucker, who uses up a fortune in rouge, wears the most extreme gowns possible, never heard of baking powder, can't sew a stitch, and wants to go to bridge parties or the theater every minute!"

❧ ❧ ❧

A "Piker."

Banker—"I stole but $10,000 and I had the opportunity to steal a million."

Lawyer—"But you didn't. And $10,000 is a State's prison offense"

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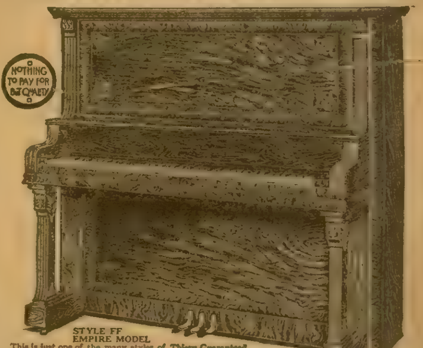
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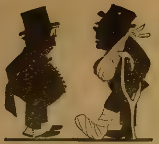


[illegible] I was tole [illegible] thot you was married'"

Kelly—"The raypoort was exaggerated, Rooney. Oi only got a broken leg and a punctured lung, in an automobile collision."

* * *

Good Plan.

Willie came in to his mother with an expression of great earnestness. "Mamma," he asked, "if a poor, hungry little boy was to come to the back door and ask for something to eat, would you give him that piece of pie that was left over from dinner."

"Yes, Willie, of course I would," said the mother.

Willie's face cleared.

"All right," he said. "Just wait a minute till I run round to the back door."

A Long Run.

A Kansas man says this is one of the best ones he has heard recently:

"I was on a small Western railroad. The train was a little more deliberate than usual on this occasion, and the only passenger besides myself was a woman, evidently a stranger on the line. She was becoming very nervous, fidgeting about, and every time the conductor or brakeman passed she would ask:

"'Aren't we ever going to get to W——?'

"At last the conductor grew tired of it, and replied rather snappily, 'Please have a little patience, madam. Why, I've been on this line three years——'

Before he could finish his sentence the woman exclaimed:

"'My gracious! What station did you get on at?'"

* * *

Not Surprised.

The father of a beautiful young girl sat in the den of his home one evening when there came a meek knock on the door and a Percy-like apparition entered the room.

"Well," [illegible] the fond father, after gazing for a minute [illegible] at the apparition [illegible] "what can I do for you?"

"I—I—I," [illegible] stammered the youth. "I came to tell you, Mr. Jones, that your daughter has promised to marry me."

"I am not surprised to hear it," was the rejoinder of the fond parent. "She told me that she would get square with me when I refused to buy her a Pekinese pup."

COMPLEXIONS.

Beloved sisters, don't you think
 It time to change your color scheme?
We're rather bored with white and pink;
 It palls, this fare of peach and cream.

The ancient Briton, stained with woad,
 A dazzling, lasting, harmless blue,
Suggests a very fetching mode,
 That we think should appeal to you.

And there's the ocher that Poor Lo
 Smeared on to strike the foe with fear;
Do you not stalk the timid beau?
 We trust we make our meaning clear.

Of course your native skins might serve
 Our fancy and our hearts to strike,
But then—it takes a lot of nerve—
 We own we don't know what they're like!

* * *

Not Worth Mentioning.

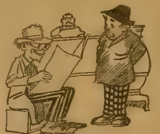
"Tommy, you've been fighting again."

"I'd hardly call it that, ma."

"But I saw you thru the window. You struck the little G[illegible] boy."

"An' knocked 'im out the first lick. It takes two scrappers to make a fight, ma."

* * *



Pat (reading)—"Man swaps his wife for a thorobred bulldog!"

Mike—"She must hov bin a raymarkably foine woman."

* * *

His Carelessness.

"What do you know of the character of the defendant?" the judge asked a negro washerwoman subpoenaed in an accident case. A white man had been arrested for careless driving of a second-hand car.

"Hit's tollable," Miranda said.

"Have you ever seen him drive his car before?"

"Yes, sah."

"Would you consider him careless?"

"Well, Jedge, ez fer de car—dat little thing ain't gwinter hurt nobuddy, but being us is all here, I might ez well tell you dat he sho' is keerless 'bout payin' fo' his wash."

* * *

Popped Out at the Popping.

Aunt—"I suppose, Edith, you said 'This is so sudden' when Mr. Slowboy proposed."

Niece—"No, I fully intended to, but I was so excited I forgot and exclaimed 'At last!'"

* * *

The Yellow Backs.

"Ah! The beautiful green of everything!" rhapsodized the Idealist Poet. "What surpasses green?"

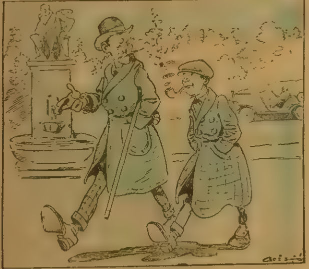
"Yellow," replied the Practical Poet. "That comes in larger denominations."—Judge.

* * *

The Alternative.

Willis—"So you've organized a company to manufacture aeroplanes. Do you think your machine will fly?"

Gillis—"I'm not sure, but I do know that if it don't go up the company will."



Old Flintskinner—"Don't you ever save anything for a rainy day?"

Young spendthrift—"I did have an umbrella, but I haven't seen it since the last time you borrowed it."

Neglecting Home Industries.

"Does your husband gamble?" asked the inquisitive woman.

"I don't know," replied Mrs. Flimgilt. "If he does he never plays bridge at any of my parties."

* * *

When Truth Will Out.

"Some women can't believe a word their husbands say," she remarked.

"Well," confided the other, "I'm not quite so badly off as that. My husband talks in his sleep occasionally."

When a Feller Needs a Friend

She—"Tell me about your early struggles."

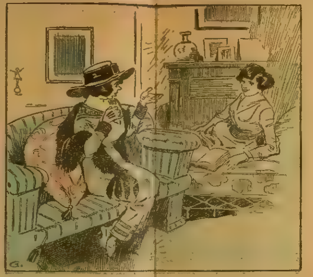
He—"There's not much to tell. The more I struggled, the more the old man laid it on."

* * *

Will Cease to Annoy.

Poet (rejected and dejected)—"I'll be thought better of when I am dead and gone."

Editor—"That's so; you won't be writing any more then."



Bess—"Has Belle detected any evidence of liquor upon her husband since he swore off?"

June—"Indeed she has! Why, only yesterday he gave her $50 and a box of gloves!"

The Dark Patch.

It is just as well there has been no particular outcry against extravagance in the use of scrubbing brushes, else one good lady would have "caught it." She was washing the tiles while two of the neighbors stood near keeping up a conversation. This was so interesting that neither of them noticed anything particular when the lady of the broom, after using it pretty freely in a particular place, put it on one side and fetched a scrubbing brush and soap. Down she went on her knees, and gave the refractory pavement a good scrub.

"Well," she exclaimed, "I can't tell what's the matter with this tile. I've broomed it and scrubbed it, and there's a dark patch still that I can't get off. Just have a look."

Thus addressed, her neighbor bent nearer, but the dark patch moved also. It was the shadow of her head that the industrious lady had been trying to wash away.

* * *

Not Worried.

"If you don't stop this business of getting arrested," remarked his honor to a trampish Southern ne'er-do-well who was in the habit of appearing before the court at least once a week, "we'll have to see if we can't send you over to Europe. They make men hustle in that section just now."

"Jedge," replied the trampish person, yawning and rubbing his hand over a stubby chin, "ef you had et som' of th' pies that has been handed out t' me since my bein' on th' road you wouldn't let a leetle thing like a bustin' shell worry ya."

* * *

An Everyday Husband.

"My husband is such a blockhead!"

"How now?"

"Couldn't locate a lady I wanted to find, altho I told him plainly that her gown had sleeves of ninon and velvet revers."

Mild Protest.

"Breddern and sisters," said Parson Absalom Jonsing, as he surveyed the scant covering of the bottom of the contribution basket, "Ah wouldn't say a wuhd to insinuate that one of yoh was stingy, but Ah has got to admit that yoh all is mighty thrifty, tryin' to get to Heaven foh about one ten-billionth of a cent a title."

* * *

Less Danger.

Passenger—"Why are we going so slow?"

Captain of the Boat—"This is the shallow part of the bay."

Passenger—"But I should think you'd go slower in the deepest part. There's more danger of drowning there."

* * *

Neighbors.

"What sort of neighbors have you?"

"The usual sort. Gets us just a little more than I earn to keep up with 'em."

Relations Were Strained.

Young Bilikins is an enthusiastic devotee of amateur photography. He always insists upon "taking" his family and friends posed in more or less artistic attitudes.

Not long ago there was an exhibition of the work of a local photographic club to which the young fellow belongs, and where were displayed the results of certain of his efforts to immortalize his family and friends. In one corner hung a group of figures twisted into the most extraordinary positions, the general effect being that of persons in various stages of paralysis.

"Who in the world are those queer-looking people?" asked some one.

"Oh, those are some of Bilikins' strained relations," said a bystander.

* * *

A Bad Memory.

One of the wittiest of clergymen, advocating the habit of preaching extempore sermons instead of reading written ones, said he had heard of a Scottish minister who always relied upon his manuscript. At last his sorrowful congregation sent a deputation to complain that he did not speak, but always read, his sermons.

"Ah, my good friends," said he, "I have a bad memory. I should forget what I had to say."

"Weel, minister," was the scathing answer, "if ye canna remember your ain discoorses ye canna blame us if we forget them."

* * *

Not Alone for Themselves.

Private Bates' aunt had, among other dainties, sent her nephew a bottle of cherries preserved in brandy.

"Very choice," thought the khakied one, and he straightway showed them to his comrades. Later the old lady received the following letter:

"Dear Aunt: Thank you so much for your gift of cherries. My pals and I appreciate them immensely, not so much for themselves as for the spirit in which they were sent."

RANK SOPHISTRY.

Mistress Conscience points at me
 An accusing finger;
Says I prate of industry,
 Yet myself malinger.
Charges that tho thrift I preach,
 Like some silly Polly,
I, by my example, teach
 Ways of reckless folly.

Mistress Conscience, spare me, pray,
 This unwelcome wooing.
Folk should follow what I say,
 Not do what I'm doing.
Freely I give good advice,
 And, to make it ample,
Show them folly's awful price
 As a bad example!

* * *

No Use for It.

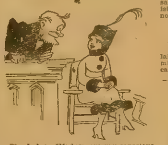
"Now, here is a showcase," said the commercial traveler, pointing to a peculiar-looking specimen of his wares, "that is bound to become popular. It magnifies everything put in it to double its natural size."

"Can't use it in my business," replied the prospective customer. "What I want is a case that will seemingly reduce the actual size of its contents."

"What is your line?" asked the dealer.

"My specialty is ladies' shoes," replied the other, with a half-suppressed grin.

* * *



The Judge—"Madam, are you conscious of any bias in this case?"

The Jurywoman—"The trimming on my petticoat is cut that way."

* * *

A Real Basis.

"He doesn't like my cooking," sobbed the three months' bride, a tear on her long lashes. "I just know he doesn't. So there!"

"What makes you think so?" her mother asked. "Has he said he doesn't like your cooking?"

"N-no-o," stammered the bride.

"Nonsense, child, it's just your imagination. I felt there was no basis——"

"There is a basis," the bride insisted tearfully. "I had been cooking the loveliest things for him for about two weeks and then he told me he had decided to become a raw food faddist. Boo-hoo-o-oo!"—Judge.

* * *

Keeping the Wolf Away.

They had been discussing the war and what would happen if even the middle-aged married men had to go. Naturally they were trying to discover how they could support their households.

"At any rate," said one, with an air of false modesty, "if the worst came to the worst, I could keep the wolf from the door with my singing."

"That's true enough, Mrs. Howell," agreed her envious neighbor. "Particularly if the wolf has any ear for music."

* * *

The Ruling Passion.

"Be as light as you can on me, judge."

"Twelve months."

"Couldn't you fix it so I could be out in time to see the world series next year?"

Couldn't Own Everything.

Pat was fishing in a river belonging to a rich man, over which there was a notice, "Trespassers prosecuted." Paddy ignored this statement and after fishing for some time caught a salmon, which he brought home and cooked. A policeman passing by the door smelled the salmon and knocked at the door.

"Well, Pat O'Hara, in whose river did you catch that salmon?"

"Well, I'll tell the honest truth. I caught it in that river near the gentleman's house over there."

"Well," said the sergeant, "don't you know everything in that river belongs to that gentleman?"

"Arrah, to be sure," said Pat. "If I went for a swim in that river would I belong to that gentleman?"

* * *

He Would Look Foolish.

A farmer went into a hardware store and while purchasing some tools was asked by the proprietor if he did not want to buy a bicycle.

"A bicycle won't eat its head off," said the man, "and you can ride around your farm on it. They're cheap now and I can let you have one for $[illegible]."

"I'd rather put the $[illegible] in a cow," replied the farmer.

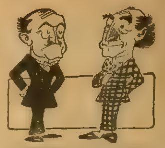
"Oh, well," said the hardware man sarcastically, "you'd look almighty foolish riding round your farm on a cow, now wouldn't you?"

* * *

Dated Ahead.

"Are those eggs fresh?"

"Yes, miss. They wouldn't have been laid till tomorrow if I hadn't made a mistake and torn an extra leaf off the calendar."



"[illegible] great [illegible] of Hamlet. I suppose the audience [illegible] come out before the curtain."

"[illegible] T[illegible] dared me to come out."

* * *

Educated Fowls.

"How did you [illegible] of your [illegible] last summer?"

"Oh, that was easy. I [illegible] mobile horn I tooted at [illegible]."

"Well?"

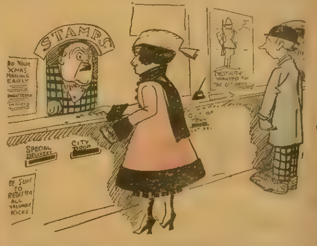
"The chickens thought a car was coming and scurried to safety."

* * *

Modesty Forbids.

"Who is the smartest boy in your class, Bobby?" asked his uncle.

"I'd like to tell you," answered Bobby, modestly, "only father says I must not boast."



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Postal Clerk (as lady lays down two cents)—"What do you want?"

Lady (sweetly)—"An automobile p[illegible]se. I heard yours was for sale."

Business Is Business.

First Surgeon—"Did you tell old Myers that the operation would cost but $5?"

Second Surgeon—"Yes, just to get his consent. His widow will stand for $5,000."

* * *

Tough Luck.

"Hiram Shucker says a chap tried to sell him a skyscraper while he was up to the city last week."

"Did Hiram fall fur that?"

"Nope. But he fell in a coal hole while he was lookin' the durned thing over."

Blames History.

[illegible]

Willie—"Excuse me, miss, but I expect it was history repeating itself again."

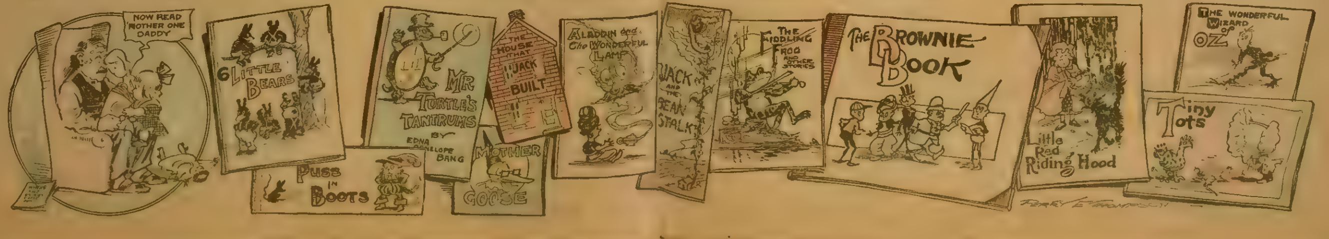
* * *

Pleasure for Father.

Friend of the Family—"William, can it be possible that I heard you say, 'Hello, governor,' to your father?"

William—"Yes; it pleases poor dad. You see, he really hasn't any say in anything at home. Mother's the real ruler."

Christmas Books Dad Has to Read



NOW READ 'NOTHER ONE DADDY
6 LITTLE BEARS
MR TURTLE'S TANTRUMS BY EDNA PENELOPE BANG
THE HOUSE THAT JACK BUILT
MOTHER GOOSE
PUSS IN BOOTS
ALADDIN and the WONDERFUL LAMP
JACK AND THE BEAN STALK
THE FIDDLING FROG AND OTHER STORIES
THE BROWNIE BOOK
LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD
THE WONDERFUL WIZARD OF OZ
TINY TOTS

The Last Edition

By Earl H. Emmons

THE editorial room of the Daily Star presented the appearance of an unmanaged madhouse. Everywhere were loud conversation, typewriters clattering and telephone bells jangling, while reporters and office boys hurried [illegible] th from the office and ad- [illegible]

Then, as the hands of the clock crept around to 4 p. m. there came a sudden lull as the last piece of copy, marked with the cabalistic "30," was sent in to the compositors, and a few minutes later a loud hammering, followed shortly by a quiet pause; then a low, deep rumble voiced the fact that another issue had gone to press on time, and that another chapter was added in the history of the paper.

In the editorial room remained two figures—young Jim Daly, assistant editor, assistant manager, star reporter and general all-around utility man, and owner-publisher of the Star, John McQuin. The other three reporters, together with the two office boys and several carriers who had helped increase the confusion on general principles, had all followed the forms to the pressroom to secure the first copies of the paper.

On one side of the room Daly sat at his flat-topped desk busily clearing up left-over material and jotting down data for the following day, while opposite him, in his half-private office, partitioned off from the main room, McQuin huddled in his swivel chair staring into the wastebasket.

Then, in the midst of his work, came a clatter on the opposite side of the wall. The door burst open, and a tow-headed youngster, with a paper carrier's canvas sack over his shoulder, shot in.

"Paper, Mist' Daly," he panted, then turned and rushed out again as the star reporter smilingly thanked him and took up the inky-smelling sheet.

"Pretty good-looking front page today," he remarked, turning toward McQuin, who could be seen thru the open doorway. "Beats the devil about the Atlantis, tho, doesn't it, chief?" he continued, as he received no answer from his superior. "Gee, think of it! Ship hits derelict, and captain with handful of crew deserts while the boat without a commander sinks with all on board."

"Gee, the boss must have an awful case of the bowwows!" Daly muttered to himself, as he still received no answer. For a moment he sat in thought, but James Daly was a young man of action, and presently he arose and crossed over to the publisher's door, where he stood an instant surveying the older man.

"Oh, by the way, chief," he said, as an excuse, "what do you think of running the anniversary number with a colored front page? I have an idea for it I would like you to look over."

Slowly McQuin raised his head. He looked very tired as he sat there, and he appeared even older than he was, while his dark-circled eyes and wrinkled face plainly spoke of trouble and worry.

"Jimmy," he said at last, "I have something to tell you." Then after a long pause he added, "There won't be any anniversary number. We—we are thru."

"We are what?" cried the assistant editor, hardly believing his ears.

"We are thru, Jimmy," repeated the other, as he turned his face away. "We're done—quitting."

"What do you mean?" asked Daly. "Is this a dismissal, or——"

"No, no, Jimmy!" interrupted the publisher. "Don't you understand? We are all thru, the paper—everything. We—have sold out."

"Sold out! The Star sold out!" demanded the young man, incredulously. "When? To whom? Why?"

"Yes, the Star is gone," replied McQuin, with a catch in his voice. "We finish tomorrow and the paper will be consolidated with the Eagle, but you and I will go with them."

For a brief interval, Daly stood with staring eyes, clinched teeth and nervous gripping hands. Then his emotions burst forth.

"Sold to the Eagle!" he cried. "Then this is to be the end of the pioneer paper of the county. A paper that has for sixty-seven years been the voice of the people in this territory: To be sold out to its worst rival! That's what cuts me. Why, if it was anybody outside of another paper, I wouldn't say a word; but to surrender to a rival—— If it was my paper I would have fought it out and gone into involuntary bankruptcy without a cent before that."

"But Daly, you don't understand——"

"Understand? Understand?" replied the young man, bitterly. "I understand that you have admitted us defeated. That you have deserted—why, it's a parallel to the sinking Atlantis. Her captain deserted and left his passengers to their fate, and you—you are even worse. You talk of going over to the Eagle. My God, man! With all your years have you acquired no pride, no self-respect? You are like a general who has been captured, and then to save himself joins the enemy and turns his guns on his own people, but you can tell your future boss that you are coming to him alone. I am going back home where there are real men and men who fight to the finish!"

The next instant the star reporter was clearing out his desk, and a few moments later he jerked his hat from the hook and strode across to the opposite side of the room.

"Good-by," he said and turned away.

"Jimmy," called McQuin, and there was a tone in the old man's voice which could not be ignored.

The younger man paused. "Yes," he said.

"I wish you would stay a minute," said the publisher, "I want to show you something."

In silence Daly sat down and waited expectantly, while his bitterness, as he gazed at the forlorn, aged man before him, slowly ebbed.

"I won't try to answer the things you said," began McQuin, "because I know they are true, but I want you to understand before you judge me too harshly. Here is the book which shows the business of the Star. I want you to look over the items."

Without comment Daly took the book and glanced at its pages. On the credit side were a few, pitifully few, entries which included some scattered subscriptions and infrequent advertising contracts, while on the opposite side of the ledger were repairs, stock, payroll and the numberless items of regular expense, the total summing up loss, only loss.

"Why—why, according to this," he said, in wonder, "your weekly salary has been about seven dollars a week. What —I don't understand."

"The other expenses came first," replied the elder man, simply. "For two years I have gone home on Saturday nights with less than ten dollars, for my earnings. It was competition that did it, backed by the political bosses. They forced me out.

"I didn't want to sell the Star, Jimmy. The best of my life, I might say, my entire life, was in it, but I had no recourse. The stock is nearly all in the hands of my friends, and I couldn't let them lose. I will barely have enough to settle with them and pay my mortgage. I will have to start all over again, so I had to accept the only position offered.

"With you, it is different. You are a good writer with plenty of enthusiasm and energy to back you up in your future, while I—well, I guess I'm pretty well worn out and most of my future is behind me. I would not be much of an asset to anybody, and the Eagle is the only place I have to go. That is all, but I know you will understand, and now if you will shake hands I will say good-by."

Quietly the old man arose and extended his palm. Daly grasped his hand firmly in both of his own.

"I can't say how I feel, chief," he apologized huskily. "If I could, I would obliterate what I said, but I can only assure you, I do understand and ask you to forget."

"Good luck, my boy," said McQuin, in as cheery a tone as he could command.

"Good-by, chief," replied Daly and walked slowly toward the door.

His superior turned away and stared at the floor. Then, with his hand on the knob, Daly hesitated.

"I say, chief," he called suddenly. "Did you ever hear of Lone Tree, Iowa?"

In surprise McQuin faced him, a smile on his wrinkled old features.

"No, Jimmy," he replied, "I can't say that I have."

"Well, it's a little town out in the middle of the best State in the Union," declared Daly. "It's near where I used to live. It is a little inland city of 800 souls situated in the heart of the corn belt amid green hills and lofty trees. It is a veritable haven of peace and honest business.

"Now, Lone Tree has no paper, but it would like to have one, and my friends out there would lend all kinds of support to the enterprise. Let me show you a book. This, as you will see, is a bank book with a balance in it of four-

DROPSY $3.75 TREATMENT FREE. Dr. Miles, the great specialist, sends a new and remarkable $3.75 Dropsy Treatment Free as a Trial. Many report cured of Dropsy, Smothering, Short Breath, at home, after 3 to 15 doctors failed. Immense practice, wonderful success. Send at once for Free Treatment and List of Astonishing Cures in many states. Describe symptoms. Relief in a day or two. Address Dr. Franklin Miles, Dept. D, 482 to 492 Franklin St., Elkhart, Ind.

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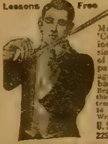

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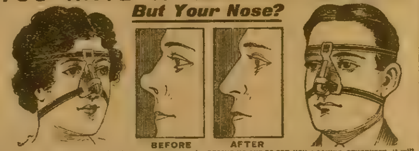

YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FACE
But Your Nose?

IN THIS DAY AND AGE attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible, for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "*looks*," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. PERMIT NO ONE TO SEE YOU LOOKING OTHERWISE; it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new *Nose-Shaper*, "TRADOS" (Model 22) corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation, quickly, safely and permanently. Is pleasant and does not interfere with one's daily occupation, being worn at night.

Write today for free booklet, which tells you how to correct ill-shaped noses without cost if not satisfactory.

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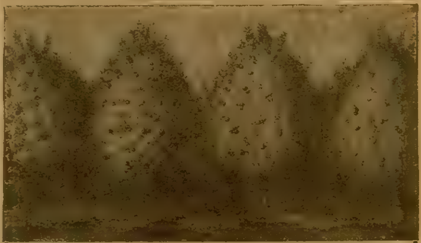


Will you let us send you this Grand Home Orchard of 15 Long Scion Apple Grafts, rooted, ready for planting, with One of the New Sappa Hybrid Cherry-Plums thrown in for good measure? See offer below.

A HOME ORCHARD is a very desirable piece of property to own and the one we offer you is especially attractive, for if properly cared for it will last practically a lifetime and bear you barrels upon barrels of the choicest of apples and cherry-plums. The orchard is made up of 5 Delicious, 5 Wealthy and 5 Northwestern Greening Apples and 1 Sappa Cherry-Plum. We have made a special cooperative advertising arrangement with our nursery that enables us to send you these 16 grafts, all charges prepaid, at proper planting time, if you will accept our offer as given below.

Description of Varieties

DELICIOUS. Probably the highest quality apple now in existence. Beautiful in shape and color and a good keeper. One of the very best apples for home garden. Tree is a thrifty grower and comes into bearing at an early age. Originated in Iowa.

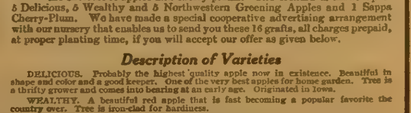
WEALTHY. A beautiful red apple that is fast becoming a popular favorite the country over. Tree is iron-clad for hardiness.

NORTHWESTERN GREENING. A fine hardy apple especially desirable for late winter use. Large showy fruit and of good quality in its season.

SAPPA HYBRID CHERRY-PLUM. As its name indicates this is a new fruit being a cross between the cherry and plum. The fruit is somewhat larger than the regular sweet cherry, is of good quality and is borne in great profusion on young trees, commencing the next year after planting. An extremely valuable new fruit.

The Long Scion Grafts are rooted and ready for planting and are handled and set the same as little trees. Not having to be transplanted they grow very rapidly, make an exceptionally HARDY ROOT SYSTEM and commence bearing about as early as will 2-year tree set at same time.

We want to send you this fine ORCHARD, all charges prepaid, with plain directions for planting and care, all at our expense. Just read our offer below, then fill out the coupon and mail to us at once and we will have the 16 Long Scion rooted Grafts sent to you, direct from the nurseries at proper time for planting in your section.



THE FARMING BUSINESS,
600 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

I inclose 50 cents, for which send me The Farming Business for one year, and as a gift your Grand Home Orchard of 15 Long Scion Apple Grafts, rooted ready for planting, and 1 New Sappa Hybrid Cherry-Plum.

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teen hundred and sixteen dollars which I have been able to save out of my thirty a week during the two years you have been going home broke.

"Next week will be started the Lone Tree Reporter, a paper published to fill a long-felt want, with James Daly and John McQuin joint owners and editors."

"But Jimmy," replied the elder man, "what could I——"

"Aw, never mind," answered Daly. "There'll be plenty for you to do molding public opinion and keeping track of the accounts. So don't feel this is charity. It's simply a job and we'll start as soon as you are ready. When can you [illegible]"

"Let's see," replied McQuin, "would tomorrow be soon enough?"

* * *

Pop's Nice New Auto.

Pop was threading his way, on first [illegible] among the precipices of lower Broadway. His passengers were marveling at the subterranean passages exposed to the light of day—and the overhead gas mains.

"Yes, Milton and I always tell our friends," Ma was saying, "that it is a New Yorker's own fault if he doesn't [illegible] his surroundings. Where on earth [illegible] find another city from which [illegible] can make so many enjoyable little [illegible]

[illegible] st as we're doing today," contributed Pop, dodging a picket fence that [illegible]ered an excavation twenty feet deep. "Everybody goes to that little place on Staten Island in the summer. Why not in winter just as well? The air is fine and bracing. And as long as you have a car——"

"Besides," interrupted Ma, eagerly, "when you go out for dinner on Sunday like this you can give your cook an extra holiday and get fresh air in your lungs, and anyway, if I were at home, my roast alone would cost me $3, and this table d-hote is only a dollar a head. Three dinners for what my roast alone would cost."

"And it's a crackerjack dinner, too," added Pop. "Wait'll you taste the spaghet', Bill. Garlic! M'm! And the chicken. Fresh killed. Got 'em right on the place."

"That's right. It's really worth a dollar and a half," Ma declared.

"Oh, gosh!" exploded Pop.

The ferry attendant held up his hand. The gates closed in front of the car, instead of behind it.

"I've never yet made the trip to Staten Island that I haven't been held up!" growled Pop. "I wonder whether they make it their business to lay for me."

Leaving the ferryhouse on the Staten Island side, Pop started to apologize.

"The roads leading to this joint aren't anything extra. We could go a roundabout way, but what's the use of prolonging the agony? Every time we go over a bump or into a rut you keep thinking of the future fodder! See?"

"Ah! Now we're nearing it," gurgled Ma. "See that little, low, white place with the green roof? Yeh, that's it. Isn't it cute?"

Every one threw off the rugs in joyous anticipation. Pop brought the car to a stop. There was a strange, desolate air about the entrance. There was also a small white sign.

"Will reopen May 1st. To welcome all our friends and patrons."

"Welcome be——"

"Milton!"

In the distance a bell tinkled. A slack, shaggy nag crawled along the road, pulling a queer wagon with glass sides. It drew nearer.

"Say, give us five ice cream sandwiches, will yuh?" moaned Pop.

* * *

Family Charms.

"It seems to me," suggested Dubert to his wife as she was dressing for the ball, "that it would be better if I were to display my back instead of you displaying yours.'

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Dubert in amazement.

"Well, I mean that it would be better for the reputation of the family and reflect more credit on us if my beauties were displayed instead of yours. You see, I have been taking physical culture for some time and I have a pretty nifty neck and shoulders.

"I know that it is customary for women to display their backs and that it is not customary for men to display theirs. But the theory is, I take it, that a woman shows her shoulders because they are beautiful. Now when they are not beautiful the reason shouldn't hold good. When a man has beautiful physical development and a woman hasn't, why shouldn't the man exhibit his charms?"

"You are mistaken," replied Mrs. Dubert. "A woman doesn't display her shoulders because they are beautiful, but because it is fashionable."

"Ah! Now I get you! You have to be up to date, abreast of the times! And there's right where you shine. You're right in it. Hanged if your back isn't more like a relief map of the war district than anything I ever saw! Nothing could be more up to date than a war map, could it?

"If any one can show vertebrae that represent the Alsatian mountains better than yours that person will have to [illegible] At the [illegible] of the [illegible] is represented by [illegible] shoulder blade——"

"That will do," declared Mrs. Dubert, hotly.

"Do? I should say it would do. It fills the bill perfectly. It is easy to observe how that range of mountains winds about——"

"You should be very glad," interrupted Mrs. Dubert, "to have me go as a relief map to illustrate your lecture. All other lecturers have maps and you should have one. It makes the lecture so much more interesting. Many a time I have noticed people nodding in the midst of your dissertations about the war and you really need me [illegible]'

* * *

Had Paid His Bill.

In the days of the country inn and when traveling overland was done on horseback or in carriages, the eccentric John Randolph of Roanoke was passing over a road that was new to him. He stopped at an inn for dinner. The meal being over, the driver hitched in his team and was ready to resume the journey, when the innkeeper, doubtless with the best intentions, inquired of Randolph where he was going.

"I've paid my bill and it's none of your business," gruffly answered the traveler.

About half a mile from the inn Randolph found that the road forked. He, of course, did not know which end to take, so he sent the driver back to inquire of the innkeeper.

"You can tell Mr. Randolph that he has paid his bill and that he can take whichever way he chooses," returned the innkeeper

* * *

The New Butler.

A Glencoe woman was giving instructions to her new butler, who seemed to have but a faint conception of the duties of a position for which he demanded high wages

"Remember," said the woman, "that in announcing meals you are to say 'Breakfast is ready,' 'luncheon is ready,' 'dinner is served.'"

Not long after the woman ventured to experiment on a dinner to a few intimate friends. Her dismay can be imagined when, on appearing at the drawing-room door to announce dinner, the butler exclaimed in clarion tones:

"Breakfast is ready, luncheon is ready, dinner is served."

Her Diary.

"It seems to me that the soldiers spend a great deal of time smoking cigarettes and writing diaries," said Mrs. Terwilliger

"Since Julius Caesar," replied Terwilliger, "warriors have been strong for cigarettes and diaries. The cigarettes are all right but all diaries, including Caesar's, are a mistake

"When a man writes an anecdote down in a diary it stays there in exactly the same form forever. On the other hand an anecdote narrated solely by word of mouth evolutes from time to time as the various narrators happen to be seized with happy inspirations and see chances for interlineations and embellishments. After an anecdote has been evolved from a small beginning thus a number of years it would jar the originator to see it written in a diary as it really happened, written truthfully and to suit the credulity of the times

"And there are other reasons why I am against diaries. They play the dickens with chance readers.

"Now, you, my dear, keep a diary. You have kept it for years and you put me in it, and it keeps me busy looking up what you have said about me. I can learn whether I am stingy or hard-headed or a 'good old dear.' This is the first time I have ever mentioned it to you, for I know I am not supposed to read the darn thing. Even when you said that I was growing more bald every day and fatter around the belt line and thinner every place else, I couldn't say a word.

"I have become accustomed to the references to myself, but the mysteries still annoy me. The other day you wrote down: 'Mr. Bundinger says he has three hay burners. Funny.'

"I was wild to know what 'hay burners' are. And what did Bundinger want with them? And why had you labeled it 'funny'? After a long and wearisome investigation I found that Bundinger had three horses and that they were used in the transfer business. Automobiles burn up gasoline, whether business is good or not. Horses consume or burn hay after the same fashion. But where the joke came in I have not yet discovered.

"What are you laughing at now? If you had written the word 'tragedy' after the entry I could have gone on my way rejoicing. I am not looking up tragedy. But the label 'funny' undid me.

"Diaries are a bad thing."

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OUR COMPANY IS THE OLDEST AND LARGEST, with LARGER CAPITAL than any other House. Where ordinary Houses buy A FEW HUNDRED, we buy THOUSANDS of Skins and Hides every day, selling to American and Canadian Manufacturers, and exporting to all Countries; just sent a $30,000 shipment to Sweden. Little dealers cannot compete. We've no Traveling Agents. We want BEEF HIDES, too, paying 20 cents for GREEN HIDES 30 cents for GREEN CALF SKINS, and HORSE HIDES up to $8 00 each. We want your GINSENG and GOLDEN SEAL. Send for ILLUSTRATED TRAPPERS GUIDE It is Free. WE TAN all kinds of Hides, making garments for our Customers, from their hides. SHIP US YOUR FURS AND HIDES. TODAY. Ask your Banker about us. The OLD SQUARE DEAL HOUSE. Established 60 years. WEIL BROS. & CO., Box F. 14 FORT WAYNE, IND.

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FREE Sell 6 boxes of Rosebud Salve at 25c box. Valuable preparation for burns, sores, pimples, piles, catarrh, corns, bunions, etc. Return [illegible] and we will forward these 3 handsome [illegible] premiums, or choice from large catalog. [illegible] salve at once. WE TRUST YOU.
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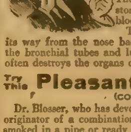
Medicated Smoke Drives Out Catarrh



Catarrh is a disease of the mucous membrane. It is characterized by a discharge through the nostrils or into the throat. It usually begins with a cold in the head. Beginning in the nostrils it spreads to all the mucous membranes of the body. The nasty discharge being swallowed, it upsets the stomach and from the stomach it is taken into the blood, and poisons and deranges the whole body. The discharge is all the time inclined to work its way from the nose back into the head—down into the throat—into the bronchial tubes and lungs. Herein is its greatest danger. Catarrh often destroys the organs of hearing and removes the sense of smell.

DR. BLOSSER'S REMEDY
REACHES HERE
AND HERE
AND HERE
AND HERE
AND HERE

Try This Pleasant Herb Smoke Free
(CONTAINS NO TOBACCO)

Dr. Blosser, who has devoted 42 years to the treatment of catarrh, is the originator of a combination of medical herbs, flowers and berries to be smoked in a pipe or ready prepared cigarette. This smoke vapor reaches all the air passages of the head, nose and throat. *As shown in the accompanying illustration*, the warm healing antiseptic vapor is carried directly to the very parts affected. This Remedy fights and kills the catarrh germs where liquids, sprays, douches, salves and medicated creams cannot possibly go. It is a most reliable remedy and is so simple and convenient that it can be used at home by any man, woman or child. It is entirely harmless, containing no tobacco or habit forming drug. No matter how severe or long standing your case may be he wants to show you what the Remedy will do for you.

Free Sample Package by Mail
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Write a post card or cut out and fill in the free sample coupon, mail it to Dr. Blosser and he will send you by mail a liberal trial package entirely free. This free package contains some of the Remedy for smoking in a pipe (new pipe included) and some of the medicated cigarettes. He will also send you an illustrated booklet explaining about catarrh and giving letters from customers who have used this Remedy. When you try the free sample you will see how the warm pleasant medicated vapor goes to every spot and gives such immediate relief.

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DR. J. W. BLOSSER,
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FREE SAMPLE COUPON
Dear Doctor:—Please send me by mail, free of all charges, a trial supply of your Catarrh Remedy and your illustrated booklet.
Name ....
Post Office ....
R. F. D. No. .... Box .... State ....
P. O. Box .... Street ....
(Spell out name with pencil, very, very plainly.)
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Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

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TOBACCO FACTORY WANTS SALESMAN; [illegible]ay, steady work and promotion: experience unnecessary as we will give complete instructions. Piedmont Tobacco Co., B-21, Danville, Va

AGENTS WANTED

EVERY HOME ON FARM, IN SMALL TOWN or suburb needs and can buy the wonderful Aladdin kerosene (coal-oil) mantle lamp, five times as bright as electric, tested and recommended by Government and 34 leading universities; awarded gold medal; one farmer cleared over $500 in 6 weeks; hundreds with rigs or autos earning $100 to $300 per month; no capital required; we furnish goods on time to reliable men; write quick for distributor's proposition, and lamp for free trial. Mantle Lamp Co., 607 Aladdin Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

AGENTS: BIG HIT. OUR 5 PIECE ALUMINUM Set is all the rage. Cheaper than enamel ware. Sells like wildfire. Guaranteed 20 years. Retail value $5.00. You sell to housewives for only $1.83. Biggest seller of the age. 9 sure sales out of every 10 shown. Others cleaning up $10.00 to $20.00 a day. Answer this quick to secure your territory. Div. NN 5, American Aluminum Mfg. Co., Lemont, Ill.

1917 SPRING SUIT FREE—A WONDERFUL Amazing Offer—If you are a live wide-awake man, we want you to get one of our elegant spring suits, made to your measure, absolutely Free. You can make $25.00 extra every week and get your own clothes without cost. Write us at once and get details of this "Startling Offer." Spencer Mead Company Dept. 1157, Chicago.

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The Boy Skipper

Or, The Skylark's Cruise

By Milford Merrill

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CHAPTER XIII.

TOBIAS HATCHWAY sat propped in an old-fashioned arm-chair in the small front room of his home when a rap sounded on the outer door. The old sailor was alone in the house, his boy helper having gone home after doing the chores and seeing that Tobias had his evening meal of bread and milk and sour apples.

"Come in," called the sailor, who was plainly crippled with rheumatism, since one of his feet, swathed in bandages, was elevated on a pine box just in front of his position.

Tobias Hatchway was a thickset, rugged-featured man, with the frosts of five and sixty winters to his credit. It was not age, but hard work and exposure that had worsted the man in his battle with the world.

The man who crossed the threshold and stood in the presence of Sailor Tobe was thickset, also, with a seamed and hardened visage, keen, reddish eyes, and an unwholesome expression withal. Nevertheless he was clad in well-made clothes, and bore the air of one who had wealth and to spare.

"Well, of all men on this green earth!" exclaimed the sick sailor, raising both hands aloft.

"So, Tobias, you wasn't expecting your old friend Dave to call tonight," chuckled the visitor, settling his big form in the only other chair in the room. "I've come down from the mines to see you, my friend, and I make no doubt you are glad to see me."

Tobias nodded without reply.

"Where's the family, Tobe?"

"You see before you all there is of it, Dave," grunted the other, whose drawn and pallid face told of both mental and physical suffering.

"You don't mean to tell me that you are running this place all by yourself, Tobe."

"Jack Spindler's boy Tim comes in twice a day to see if I want anything," explained the crippled old sailor. "This house has run down tremendously since you and me sailed the lakes a dozen years ago, Dave. Then I had a wife and two children. All are gone now, and I'll soon follow."

"All gone, eh?" uttered the visitor. "Well, this last calamity was a bad one, considering the boy was your main support. That's why I came down, Tobe."

"Ah, is it so?"

"True as can be, Tobe, old friend. I feel sorry for you, and to see you in such a helpless condition grieves my heart."

"I didn't know you possessed such a thing, Dave," and Hatchway actually forced a smile to his worn old face.

"Now, don't go to throwing compliments around promiscuous!" snarled the mine king. "I know how you feel toward me without your flinging out slurs like that. So the boy Philip is dead and gone, Tobe?"

"That's what everybody says," groaned the old sailor.

"You'd ought to feel resigned."

"I wish I was dead."

"See here, pard, let me tell you something," suddenly spoke Stanley, bending toward the other, a flame of intense heat in his sodden eyes. "I came down here on purpose to talk about that boy."

"You did?"

"Yes. I wish to know the truth about him, Tobe Hatchway."

"That's what you'll git if I tell you anything, Dave."

"Good enough. Now that he is dead there's no necessity to keep it secret longer."

"I don't know what you mean, Dave."

Outside, very close up to the window, a pane of which was cracked, allowing the sound of voices to go into the outer air, crouched a boy whose every sense was aroused as to what was passing within the little room. He had caught the words of the two men, especially those of Dave Stanley, and he was profoundly stirred.

"Yes, you do, you old hypocrite!" roared Stanley, forgetting discretion in his eagerness to learn more.

"Now, that is a nice way to commence on a sick man!" pleaded the shrill yet low voice of the ill sailor.

The merciless manner of the mine owner angered the listening boy, yet he resolved to hold his temper and wait.

"Beg pardon if I seem hasty and rasping," suddenly wheedled the man from the copper country. "You may as well be frank with me, Tobe, and tell me what I want to know."

"Well, what do you want to know?"

Hatchway picked up a crutch that leaned against the arm of his chair, grasping it in nervous excitement, eying his visitor in a distrustful manner.

"All about the boy Philip."

"Well?"

"How long has he been with you?

"Why—er—you see——"

"No beating about the bush, Tobe Hatchway," thundered Dave Stanley. "I know that he isn't a Hatchway."

"Oh, yes, he is, and the apple of me eye, Dave!" forcefully uttered the crippled old sailor, who was beginning to get a grip on himself, and did not propose to be browbeaten by this big man of the Superior country. "If you have come here expecting me to go back on my own chick and child, you are mistaken, Dave Stanley. I know you of old——"

"And I know you, too, you old palaverer. You once admitted that the boy was not yours."

"Never, sir."

"Well, let's not argue the point now that he's dead," proceeded the visitor. "I thought perhaps the lad was one I had in mind. Had he been so there's a little estate to be divided, and providing Phil had been the one I thought, his friend Tobias, who has been a kind father to him for many years, would be entitled to a few thousand, enough to take care of him in his old age. Humph, I was mistaken. You have my sympathy for your loss, Tobe. I trust you will be better soon." He rose and turned to go. "What time does the next train leave for the North, Tobias?"

The speaker took out a sack, extracted therefrom a liberal chew of fine-cut, filling his jaw with the weed.

"Why—er, Mr. Stanley," called the quavering voice of Tobias, "you ain't going this quick, are you?"

"No use loitering here," growled the visitor. "The boy Phil isn't the one I had been led to believe he was, and that settles a question in my mind. I haven't time to waste on common affairs, so good-by, old chap. I am going directly home."

"No, no! Don't go yet," appealingly

FRESH-AIR WAR

Miss Maloney (taking off her coat and hat and giving her sleeves a hitch so that they come well above her elbows)—"Gee, it's chizzly in here! Say, Jimmy, run and get the window-pole, that's a good kid! I'm liable to freeze to death with that window open.

"Miss Smith opened it, did she? Well, I guess here's where she gets a free lesson how to shut it again. Miss Smith ain't running this office 'sfar's I ever heard. You just run along and get that pole.

"Honest to goodness, it seems to me like I never did see such sassy kids! It certainly is the hardest thing to get 'em to do anything. Thanks, Jimmy. Just shove the window up while you're there, will you? I don't want to get my hands all dirty.

"Well, I guess you will, too. Seems to me like you kids think you're running this office. My land, I wish the boss'd hand the job to me for a couple of days! There'd be some folks that'd be conspicuous by their absence when I handed the job back.

"Well, if Miss Smith thinks that window's going to stay open, she's liable to get a little valuable information, too.

"What's that? If I'd wear enough clothes I'd be warm enough? Well, I guess I got a right to dress like I please and not be exposed to ketching my death of cold just because I happen to be working in the same office with a couple of jealous old maids.

"Now, Jimmy, you push up that window. Very well, sir, if you don't see fit to do as you're told, I guess there's folks can attend to you.

"You never mind who. I guess I got enough stand-in in this office to have folks see that I don't freeze to death right at my own desk

"Well, you gimme that pole, then! There, now! I guess that'll hold you for a while, anyway.

"Now, Jimmy, you leave that window alone. If you dare to open it I'll certainly speak to—— Well, never you mind who. It'll be somebody that'll see to you fast enough.

"Now, look a here, Jimmy McGuire, you shut that window now, right this minute! Miss Jones wants it open, too, does she? Well, I guess I got enough of a stand-in with some folks to show you and both those old maids where they get off at.

"No, I don't think I'm the boss, but I guess you better be kind of careful—— Maybe you ain't scared yet? I never said you was. That shows you got something coming to you.

"No, Miss Jones, I most certainly don't intend to have that window open. That hasn't got a thing to do with it. I got a right to dress like I please without being exposed to take my death of cold just because I gotta work in the same office with a bunch of jealous old maids that'd squeal and run if they saw any stylish dressing—it's so unfamiliar to them.

"I most assuredly do consider my clothes stylish! I guess I take enough time planning 'em and they cost enough, too. I guess if I didn't dress any more stylish than some folks not a mile away that I could mention, I'd be just's liable to be an old maid as they are.

"I ain't denying there may be worse things than being an old maid. I certainly never said I was crazy to get married, but I do know that if I don't get married it won't be because I didn't have plenty of chances. There's some folks that I could mention not a mile away that I bet never had a beau to their names.

"I tell you fair and square, Miss Jones, that window ain't going to be left open—not if I have to go to the boss and speak to him about it right to his face. Just's soon's he comes out of his private office ——

"Oh, you're going right now, are you? Well, I certainly think you're making the biggest mistake of your life. And I guess I have a good deal better stand-in in this office than some folks I could mention.

"It ain't that I don't like fresh air. I like it just's well's anybody. Don't I open my window every night, even when it gets real cold sometimes? But I tell you I just can't stand a draft. I'm constituted so delicate! I ain't rough and strong like some folks

"Wearing low necks and short sleeves don't have a thing to do with it. I'm more liable to take cold when I bundle up

"What's that? He says the window's going to be left open if the other girls want it that way and I can put my coat on if I'm cold? Well, I certainly don't intend to have my pers'nal liberty interfered with to that extent. And if I'd known what kind of a man was boss here I never would of accepted the position. There was a couple of others where they was crazy to have me, only there was other girls applying at the same time and they was so kind of plain-looking and not a bit of style, so I knew it would be awful hard for them to get a position and, of course, with me I don't need to stay any place where it ain't entirely congenial. I can go out and get a good job any minute of the day.

"Just soon's the boss comes out of his private office I shall go in and tell him that I ain't accustomed to associate with such rough, crude kind of folks, so I guess I'd better go somewhere else.

"No, Miss Jones, I certainly ain't going to interrupt him while he's busy in his private office, and I don't know as it's any of your business, anyway. I shall go in and speak to him when I get good and ready!"

* * *

At Home.

An agent, approaching a house, met a little boy at the gate and asked:

"Is your mother home?"

"Yes, sir," said the boy, politely.

The agent walked across the long lawn and, after rapping several times without receiving an answer, returned to the youth, saying:

"I thought you said your mother was at home."

"Yes, sir, she is," replied the boy.

"But I have rapped several times without receiving an answer."

"That may be, sir," said the boy. "I don't live there."

GALLSTONES

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called the sailor, his eyes kindling with an eager, avaricious gleam. "I may be mistaken about Phil. He has been a son to me for a good many years, yet I shan't say that he is of my own flesh and blood. Who is it has fallen heir to some property, Dave?"

"Ha, then you lied to me, you old skeezix!" roared the mine king, turning abruptly upon the cringing old man in the armchair. "You've got to tell me all about it now. How many years have you had Phil with you?"

David Stanley resumed his chair, scowling his displeasure.

"A good many, Dave."

"Think sharp. How many?"

The old sailor bent his head thoughtfully. After a moment he said

"Nigh on to ten years, Dave."

"How old was he then?"

"Jest a little chappie, Dave. Mother took to him at once, and she set as much store by him as she did the other one who died. And now Phil is gone, too. It's awful, awful!" and the sailor groaned aloud.

"Never mind heroics, old man. Tell me all about how you came to get possession of the kid"

"I think he was fished out of the water. Anyhow, an old fisherman fetched him to us one night when the earth rocked in the wust storm I ever saw. That was up nigh Manistee, years before we came here to live. I was engaged in the fish business myself at the time, and Kinder said as he hadn't any wife he fetched the half-drowned brat to me. It was good in him. We called the lad Philip after a brother of my wife's, and he's lived up to the name all right. But, Lord, he's dead and there's no more happiness for me in this world!"

The boy who crouched beneath the window outside heard all this about himself with strained interest. He was learning some things that astonished him beyond measure.

Stanley stirred and muttered an angry invective under his breath. Nevertheless the recital of the sailor man interested him.

"Can't you remember the date, Tobe?" he asked.

"No. 'Twas some time in September, tho, about nine or ten years ago."

"You are sure of that?"

"I am, dead sure."

The other reflected a minute, then said: "Tobe, did you ever try to find the parents of this boy who came to you out of old Lake Michigan that night so long ago?"

"Oh, yes, I tried, but nothing came of it."

"Lucky there didn't!" muttered the visitor.

"Now, about that inheritance, Dave?"

"Nothing to it, pard. I was only fooling," laughed the mine king.

"That's a mean trick, Dave," vented the other, trembling in weak anger. "However, I know you are not telling the truth now. Phil was somebody's child, and if I live I mean to find out whose. I neglected to do this while the poor boy lived, but his memory shan't suffer if I can help it. He was a fine boy, Dave, one of the best."

"Oh, no doubt, no doubt!" muttered the visitor. "I don't imagine the chap came from a very good family. If I was you, Tobe, I'd let the matter rest. I thought he might have been the boy I had in mind, but I see he was not."

"Who was you seeking, Dave?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter," and the mine owner got to his feet and started for the door.

"Was it the one you lost so long ago, eh?"

"What do you mean?" turning swiftly upon the sailor

"Why, I mean your little nevvy who was drowned one stormy night years ago. I heard all about it at the time—and the daddy, your brother, Dave, grieved so over the little lad he took sick and died, letting you into possession of all his mining lands. You see, I have kept track of you, old man."

"Well, you'd best keep your mouth shut about that," angrily cried Stanley. "Of course I got the property, being the only relative. The death of little Edgar was a hard blow to my poor brother."

"Say, Dave, I never jest understood the facts in that case," cried Hatchway, dropping his crutch with a clatter, leaning toward his visitor. "How was it anyhow"

"I'm not talking about the past," growled David Stanley, hesitating before the man in the chair. "I think you'd do better getting ready for the next world instead of flinging out slurs at your betters, Tobe Hatchway."

"Eh? Betters, is it?" rasped the sailor hoarsely. "You insult me, Dave, you, a man about whom there lurks many a dark suspicion. The little son of Nathaniel Stanley was lost off the yacht Florence one dark night. You was captain and profited by the boy's death. I'd like to have you explain that, Dave, instead of insulting me. No doubt you'd like to see me dead, but I ain't going to accommodate you just yet. I mean to live long enough to see the rightful heir come into his own up there in the copper country."

"You villain' What are you gabbing about?"

The strong hands of the copper king suddenly seized the throat of the old cripple. The next instant he dragged him from his chair into the center of the room.

"I've a notion to throttle you, you old reprobate!" hissed Stanley, apparently insane with rage.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE boy crouching beneath the window outside beheld the struggle taking place within the humble dwelling of Tobias Hatchway. This man, crippled, old and gray, had been a kind father to him, and Phil felt a wild thrill master him when he saw a pair of brutal hands at the old sailor's throat.

Without uttering a word, the boy, who had played the eavesdropper to some purpose, whirled back around the corner of the house, sprang up the steps and tore open the door. In another instant he was on the back of his father's assaulter, enveloping his throat with strong young fingers. He clutched with all his strength.

David Stanley released his hold on the neck of Tobias Hatchway, reeling back, choking and wheezing under the fingers of indignant Phil.

"What the Satan you up to?" yelled Stanley, not knowing who had attacked him. At the same time the little lamp on the small pine table was knocked off and extinguished, throwing the room in darkness.

Phil clung desperately, tripping the man till he reeled and fell. The boy was as yet unrecognized by either occupant of the room. Realizing this, he said nothing, but kept up his choking grip on Stanley's throat.

As the Ironport mogul offered no further resistance, Phil thumped his head sharply against the floor, then rose to his feet. He found the lamp in one corner of the room, picked it up, set it on the pine table, scratched a match and lit it, then turned to the cripple who lay back in the old armchair, breathing heavily. His eyes bulged as he looked into the face of the boy

"It is I, daddy, Phil," said the youth, with a glad smile.

"Phil—Philip!"

"Philip and none other, father mine," laughed the boy.

"But you was lost at sea——"

"All a mistake, daddy," and Phil went forward, grabbed both inert hands of the old sailor, pressing them in warm affection. "I am back home to see that you are treated white by the world. You are in trouble, I fear."

"How—how did you escape?" panted the thin lips of old Tobe. "I was told—I read that you was lost overboard mor'n a week ago, you'n one of the crew. It wasn't so. It was a lie. Did old Dave start it, Phil, my boy?"

The look in the eyes of the speaker touched the heart of the son. Phil drew the other chair near and sat down, clasping one hand of the old man in both his own Now he knew that Tobias Hatchway was not his father, since the revelations of a short time before, yet he had a very tender feeling in his heart for the only father he had ever known, and he would never disown him before the world.

Phil gave an account of the happenings that had led the public to believe that he had been consigned to a watery grave At the end of it he assured his foster-father that he meant to investigate the affair, and, if possible, bring the instigator of this attempt at murder to justice.

"That's right, my son. You won't have to go far to find the villain."

"Did you suspect any one?"

"Of course it was old Dave Stanley. He hired that man to make way with you, Phil," declared Hatchway. "Oh, I know that man of old! He is a schemer and a villain clear thru."

"I begin to think so myself," agreed the boy skipper.

Events were piling, one upon another, so rapidly as to be absolutely startling. He told his father about overhearing the conversation that had passed between him and the copper king, yet assured the old sailor of his utmost love and devotion

"You have been the only father I ever knew, Tobias," he avowed.

"Haven't you any recollection of any other, my boy?"

"Not the least. Stay! Sometimes I recall a memory of a big house and a kind woman's face. It may be she was my mother, and that I had a home elsewhere than with you, but the vision is so dim I cannot quite make myself believe there's anything to it."

"There must be, however," declared the low voice of the sailor, who yet suffered from the choking he had received at the hands of Dave Stanley. "You were quite a chunk of a boy when I received you from the hands of Job Kinderhook, way back there that night of storm and stress when all our fishing smacks were mashed into kindling wood or lost."

"Kinderhook!" exclaimed the boy. "I met him on Bear Island, but could not find him when I came away, else should have fetched him along as you wished, daddy mine."

"Wish you had!" groaned the old cripple. "I feel in my bones that I am not going to stay long here on earth, Phil, and—and I want your status fixed before I go."

"Never mind me, daddy. Get well as quick as you can. You and I are going to have a lot of fun together yet before you die."

"I wish it might be so," and the old man smiled wanly, "but I cannot give myself much hope, Phil. This much I know, Job Kinderhook knew more about you than he ever told to me. For some reason he would tell but little. He is very old now, and ought to be willing to talk. Try and find him, lad, and fetch him to me as soon as possible. Oh, I am so thankful that you escaped drowning! It gives me a thrill of new life to look upon your living face once more, dear boy"

Phil caressed the bowed head of gray, listening to the soft sobbing of the old sailor, who he now knew was not his father. He loved the old man, however, and was anxious to make his last hours on earth ones of ease and contentment. He also felt very deeply on the subject of his own identity. Who was he? What name ought he to bear, since that of Hatchway was only one of expediency?

A groan broke in upon the confab of father and son. It was then that Phil remembered that a third person was in the room. He turned in his chair to see the man he had floored sitting up, rubbing his eyes in a dazed perplexity, staring meantime rather startledly at the boy skipper.

"Why—why—er—is it you, Phil?" stuttered the mine owner, apparently doubting his own senses.

The boy faced the startled mine king, returning scowl for scowl. Stanley rubbed his eyes, then motioned with his hand, leaning toward the boy with something like a sardonic grin disfiguring his heavy features

"Little Phil, the sailor's boy, back with us once more. Holy smoke! How did you make it?' gasped the startled man.

"I made out to escape the death you had planned for me, Mr. Stanley," replied the boy skipper, with stern fierceness "Your tool, however, got what was coming to him—he drowned in the lake!"

David Stanley seemed stupefied. His astonishment at seeing alive and well the boy whom he supposed at the bottom of Lake Michigan, quite overpowered him for the time. He felt numb and less than half himself from the beating up the sailor's son had given him.

Meanwhile Phil was rapidly revolving a plan of action that was to include the assaulter of his foster-father in its workings He dared not leave the two men together, however, for there was no telling what Dave Stanley might not do to the helpless Hatchway once his young protector was out of the way

"I think you had better get out of this!" cried Phil, addressing the millionaire miner. "My father has had all he can stand of your brutality."

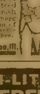
"And I of yours, you young scalawag," roared Stanley, regaining his old-time domineering manner. He struggled painfully to his feet.

"Go at once," ordered the boy skipper.

"Not till I learn how you came to turn up alive," snarled the man.

"I became your tool and he, not I, found his death in the lake."

The big man of Ironport stood quiver-



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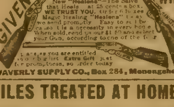

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ing with excess of emotion. His astonishment at the sudden resurrection of the boy sailor almost overpowered his sense of understanding. He understood how necessary it was to keep up an innocent front toward the public, and to the surprise of Phil, burst into a laugh.

"All a good joke," he declared, holding his sides. "I am mighty glad you wasn't drowned, Philip. Now you can look after your daddy, who is in need of a comforter——"

"After being beaten up by you," retorted Phil. "You're a coward, David Stanley, to assault a sick man. You might have killed him if his son hadn't been at hand to save him from your brutality. From this time on, I shall know where to place you. With all your ill-gotten gains, you are a coward and a bully!"

"You impudent skunk!" snarled the mine owner, going to the door. Opening this, he turned to look back at the occupants of the room.

"I'm going uptown to swear out a warrant for you, Philip Starling—not Hatchway, as you think yourself, but the son of a felon." With that the door slammed to behind the retreating form of Hatchway's visitor.

"Worse and worse!" groaned the sick man.

"What did he mean about my being the son of a felon?" asked the boy, who was not quite easy in his mind over the turn affairs were taking. "You must know who my father is or was, Tobias?"

But the old sailor shook his head, declaring he knew nothing about the parentage of his foster-son.

"Is my name Starling, daddy?"

"No, I am sure it isn't."

"Who was Starling? What did Dave Stanley mean?" persisted Phil.

"It was one of his insults," explained the old sailor. "Gideon Starling was an outlaw who lived on the Muskegon a dozen years ago."

"I'll stand no more of them," muttered Phil, with compressed lips. "I'll be back soon, daddy. I want to forestall that man in this arresting business."

CHAPTER XV.

THE boy skipper rushed forth into the outer air, indignant over the treatment his father had received at the hands of the boorish copper king of Ironport. The boy went at once to a magistrate, and altho the hour was late, the man of law did not hesitate, after hearing Phil's story, to issue a warrant for the arrest of David Stanley.

Few there were in the Sawdust City who knew the copper nabob, and in that day of early lumbering and mining great men were not worshiped as in these modern days. Justice was more fairly administered by officials of the State.

David had breakfasted at one of the best hotels, and sat picking his teeth on the veranda, when a dapper little man, with sandy hair and mustache, ran up the steps, halting before the stout, gray-haired guest who sat at indolent ease watching passers in the street.

"Is this Mr. Stanley?" questioned he of the sandy hair, at the same time scanning a paper he held in his hand.

"That's me all right," bluffly rejoined the mine owner.

"David Stanley?"

"Yes, sir, David Stanley," brusquely retorted the other. "I'm not ashamed of the name. It's an honorable one. Who be you, anyhow?"

The big man was belligerent at once, scowling down upon the dapper man with the most withering contempt

"I am the city marshal," smilingly spoke the other. "I have a warrant that compels me to arrest David Stanley — "

"What the Hades are you getting at?" roared powerful Dave Stanley, instinctively putting his hand up to a bruised spot on his coarse throat where the supple fingers of the boy skipper had lately clutched it.

"You are my prisoner, Mr. Stanley."

"Your prisoner!" the mine owner almost shouted, attracting the attention of other guests, who came out to see what was doing. "You must take me for a blamed idiot. This is no joke, no time for silly capers, let me tell you. Git! or I'll break you in two!"

The dapper little marshal was not even awed at the look of Jove on the face of the big capitalist. He gently tapped the shoulder of his quarry, simply remarking:

"Go peaceably or not as you like, sir."

"But why this outrage?" roared Stanley. "I guess you don't know who I am, you small piece of humanity!"

"I have your word for the fact that you are David Stanley."

"Which I am not denying——"

"If you don't want a scene, come along peaceably," spoke the officer, mildly yet decisively.

"Read your paper."

The marshal did so. David Stanley roared, this time with laughter, when he understood that this humiliation had been put upon him by the son of old Tobe Hatchway.

"It's all a joke," he finally assured the officer. "That boy is full of tricks like that. Go home, my little man, and forget it."

Some of the men who had been attracted outside laughed at this sally. Steve Brodney, the marshal, grew impatient. He laid a hand on the arm of his prisoner, not lightly, but with a severe jerk that fetched Stanley up standing. Another jerk landed the mine king on the sidewalk. His face grew red with rage.

"Insulting cur!" he hissed, aiming a blow at the face of the other.

Brodney side-stepped, landing a sharp fist blow under the arrested man's ear that staggered him up against the veranda post. Stanley saw stars, realizing that he had best have a care. Altho boiling with rage he consented to go peaceably after that.

There were hooting and ribald remarks from some half-grown youths who saw the affair from a street corner. To be seen walking beside this small man, his prisoner, was enough to excite all the vindictive feelings possessed by David Stanley. He resolved in his heart to get even with both Hatchway and his son. He had no thought that the affair would amount to anything further than a few hours of discomfort. Of course no justice or jury would find against him on the evidence of a boy.

When the justice's court was reached, Phil Hatchway was there to testify against the headstrong mine king.

"It was all a little friendly scuffle" explained Stanley to Justice Armstrong "This boy came in unexpectedly and imagined I was hurting his dad. Why, old Tobe Hatchway and I are old friends. I wouldn't harm a hair of his head for anything in the world."

The prisoner smiled blandly at Phil as he spoke. So with suavity the hypocritical old scoundrel hoped to carry his case thru to victory. He had counted without his host, however.

Phil had been active all the morning. The prisoner was accused of assault with intent to do great bodily harm less than murder. He pleaded his own case, but failed to counteract the surprising evidence fetched in by the boy skipper.

"I was a witness to the assault on my father," testified the boy, when called to the stand. "I do think he would have killed my father had I not been near by to interfere."

After this the prosecution produced an affidavit signed by Tobias Hatchway, giving his own version of the incident. There was no chance for the rich mine owner to escape. He was found guilty of aggravated assault and assessed a fine of one hundred dollars or ninety days in jail!

It was then that the pent-up wrath of the millionaire broke forth. He, a gentleman of wealth, to be hauled up in a common justice's court and made mock of in this way was enough to excite the wrath of the most docile Christian gentleman, which our friend from Ironport was not.

"A most beastly outrage!" he roared.

"Silence!" commanded the court. "I will give you an hour to get bail if you choose to appeal."

"I guess you don't know who I am!" thundered the outraged prisoner.

"The evidence before this court shows you to be a very dangerous man," was the justice's quick retort.

"I'll show you, I'll show you!" roared the irate prisoner, springing to his feet, smiting his heavy hands together. "I'll let you know down this way that Dave Stanley, millionaire and owner of the biggest copper mine in the Superior country, won't stand to be put upon by a petty country justice of the peace! I'll carry this to the highest court in the land!"

"You are fined twenty-five dollars for contempt of court," calmly remarked the justice.

The excitement in the little courtroom caused a sensation. Phil was pleased when he saw that, after a riotous use of language, the great mogul of Ironport took out his wallet and paid the amount assessed against him. As he walked out of the room he turned on the threshold and shook his clinched hand at the justice, hissing:

"I'll make you pay for this indignity, sir!"

The bench official only smiled at this last effort of the angry man to start a quarrel. As for the rich man's threats, Justice Armstrong held not the slightest fear. He had met with somewhat similar cases during his judicial career.

Phil went upon the street fully satisfied, now that justice had been meted out to the high and mighty Mr. David Stanley.

He hastened back to the humble home of Tobias Hatchway, where he found his foster-father still in a precarious condition. After giving the old sailor every assurance of his profound sympathy and love, the boy skipper hastened away to call a doctor.

Phil met a number of his acquaintances on the street who regarded him as one resurrected from the dead. Altogether the boy had a strenuous if not pleasant time while at Muskegon.

He sent a telegram to the mate of the Skylark at Chicago, acquainting him with his escape, and requesting that he hold the vessel in port till he—Phil—could come by rail once more to pace her deck as captain. The boy skipper decided to remain a few days longer at Muskegon, till his father was improved.

Phil had been two days at Muskegon, his father was improving, and the lad was thinking of resuming his work on board ship, when he ran unexpectedly upon Jibb Selkirk just coming off a boat that had come into harbor from the North.

"Didn't expect to see me so soon, eh?"

(Continued on Page 22.)

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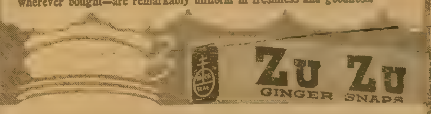

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	7	3
6	4	

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THE PAINT CORNER.

THE SNUGGLETY BUG.

No doubt you have heard of a place that
is "snug,"
And perhaps you've been told of the "bug
in the rug,"
And if that is so.
You'll all like to know
That this tale is about the warm "snugglety bug."

The snugglety bug is a cozy old soul,
But he hides himself often down deep in
a hole,
Where he's doubtless a-snooze
In a pair of old shoes,
For it must be confessed that his habits
are droll.

The snugglety bug likes the warmth of
the sun
Or the firelight cheerful when daylight
is done,
He dislikes bare walls
And he finds splendor palls
On his snug sense of comfort and notion
of fun.

There's a name that this funny bug goes
by, my dear,
And he lives in all homes where there's
comfort and cheer,
If he lives, dear, with you,
You can prove my words true,
For his nickname's "Content," he's a
guest without peer.

* * *

DREADFUL DRAGON.

Once upon a time in an old city in Syria there lived a king and his people. They raised flocks and fruits and were very prosperous, except for one thing, and of that thing they grew more and more afraid. And well they might fear, for it was a sea dragon—a creature covered with scales, half fish and half beast, with eyes that shot fire and a bellowing voice much more dreadful than thunder.

This horrible creature came to drink at a pond near the city, and whole armies came to kill him there, but never succeeded, and finally the people began to give him sheep every day so that he would go away, for his hot, poisonous breath floating over the city made the people ill.

The plan worked very well till the sheep were all gone and then the dragon said: "Very well. I can't help that; I must have my breakfast and supper and you may give me a boy or a girl every day—one under fifteen will be best—and if you don't I will destroy your city and devour you, every one!"

So they began to draw lots and boy after boy and girl after girl was given to the dragon, until, after months had gone by and every family was either in mourning or was in terror of what might come any minute the lot fell on the King's daughter. What was to be done? The King was beside himself; he offered the half of his kingdom if his daughter might be saved, but the suffering people would not listen and the Princess was led away and fastened to a rock as the others had been fastened, to wait for the dragon's appearance.

Just then a brave knight, who lived in a distant country, had a dream in which he was directed to go as fast as he could to the suffering city, and of course he obeyed and rode straight up to the rock where the maiden was lying. "What is this," he exclaimed; "why are you fastened here while all those people watch from a distance?"

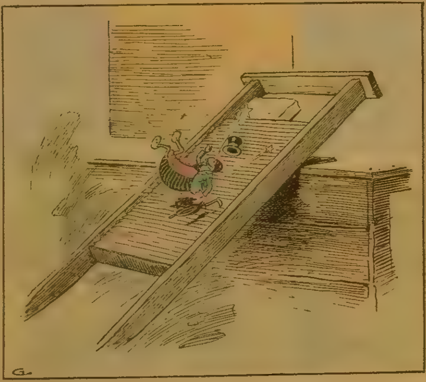
"Fly! I implore you, fly!" answered the Princess. "Here comes the dragon this minute—he will kill us both," and then she told the whole story, while the dragon dragged his horrid body out of the pond and roared till the earth trembled.

But do you suppose George, the knight, was afraid? Not a bit of it. He just threw his spear thru the dragon's thick neck and pinned him to the ground. Then he told the girl not to be afraid, but to put her girdle around the spear and lead the monster back to the city, and when they started—George walking beside them leading his horse—the dragon went along like a lamb.

When they arrived George took his sword—a magic one, of course—and cut off the creature's head, while the people shouted and proclaimed him their deliverer. But he told them that, like all true knights, he had the help of the Lord whom he served, and then he asked them to serve Him, too, and to embrace the Christian faith. And they did.

But that isn't the end of the story. Many years afterward there came about a great event known as the Crusades, and among the knights and soldiers that went to the old city where the dragon fight happened was an English king, Richard the Lion-Hearted. He saw the well where the dragon's body was thrown and the stream where George washed his hands, and when he went home he told the people about the Christian soldier and knight and asked that St. George be made the patron saint of the land.

That is the reason why St. George's cross is on the English flag; that explains, too, why there are more than 160 churches in England and some in this country dedicated to St. George, and why the children of England have a holiday on the 23d of April, which is St. George's day.



Billy Bug—"Gosh! I'd sure like to find the guy who soaps these steps every day!"

* * *

RED CROSS DOGS.

A vicar of Versailles, France, conceived the idea of gathering in all the stray dogs that he could find along the roads and in the ruined villages and the railroad stations—wherever the war had left these victims—and taking care of them. For some of them he has found homes, but the larger dogs, when they had been fed and had become strong and well, he turned over to be trained for Red Cross work.

He says that it is the same instinct that leads a dog to dash into the water to save a drowning person that will lead him to rush into any sort of danger to rescue a wounded soldier, and many a man owes his life to the intelligence of these four-footed friends of the human race.

The dog understands it to be his duty to seek out the men who are in trouble and to lead the "ambulancier" to them. Sometimes they seize the soldier's cap or rifle and bring it back as evidence of a "find," but in any case they give the message in their own way to the proper person, that they can lead him to the wounded man, and they do it at top speed. Sometimes they fairly drag the ambulancier to the spot where the man lies.

There are upward of 500 Red Cross dogs at the front.

* * *

THE PAINTED VILLAGE.

In Switzerland, near the border of Lake Geneva, is a village which would surprise some of the girls and boys of America, if they should happen to walk into it. Nearly all of the white stucco houses are decorated on the outside with drawings—pictures of milkmaids, cows, battles, soldiers, people running for a train, and anything else that occurred to the young artist. He was a boy of the place, but subsequently went to Paris and studied art. The name of the village is St. Legier, but it is sometimes called the Painted Village.

These little places on the mountainside are very pretty, with their pink and blue houses hung with strings of beans and yellow corn, and their large fountains, where all the washing is done. Sometimes imitation windows are painted on the outside of the houses, usually representing closed green shutters, but sometimes displaying curtains or drapery.

The children clatter up and down the steep cobblestone roads, sometimes with long baskets strapped on their backs, for if things are to be carried up hill it is much easier to have the arms free. If you look into the baskets you will often find them filled with bread, for there are no ovens in the villages, and the people have to get a week's supply of bread from the towns below them. But one modern luxury shines thru all this quaintness. The villages are lighted with electric lights, just like any large city. You see there are many lively streams pouring swiftly down the mountains, and their force is turned into electric power, so that electricity is easy to get, and very cheap.

* * *

ABOUT DRUMS.

In 1715 when Frederick the Great was just 3 years of age, he was much given to strutting about, beating a drum, and his father thought that feat indicated that he would be a great military genius. In order that the boy's actions might be reproduced when history should ask for them, a great painter was sent for, and now the portrait of the lad as he beats his drum is hanging on a wall of the palace. Frederick did become a great military man, but not all the boys who beat drums may be expected to turn out as he did—if that were to be true what an army of generals we should have!

Drums have always been used by native races to drive away evil spirits, to terrify foes, to make men fight better, or to summon friends together. They are of all sizes, sorts and shapes. In China drums are made of baked clay, bowl-shaped, with a skin stretched across the top. A drum from Central America is cone-shaped, over four feet in height and is hollowed out of a solid block of wood. An Ashantee drum is shaped like a bottle—a very large one—a Mandingo drum resembles a tenpin upside down, while a Friendly Islands drum, between four and five feet high, is just like a post with a head of leather not more than six inches across.

Did you ever wonder whence the custom came of having a man in front to carry the drum so that the drummer could get a good whack at it? It came from the fact that all old drums were very long and narrow and an ordinary man carrying his own drum could hardly reach the ends. A helper to carry the instrument in front of the player relieved the difficulty.

* * *

POOR DOLLY.

Jean is a very lively little person of 5, who hardly knows what the word "quiet" means. One afternoon she came into the house merry and noisy after her afternoon nap, and as she burst in like a firecracker she caused quite a commotion. Her mother, thinking to give a gentle hint, said:

"Your dolly has been so good while you've been out. She hasn't talked nor made a bit of noise nor broken anything. She has just sat here as quiet as a mouse."

"Poor dolly!" said Jean, who did not fail to understand her mother's remark, "I'm sorry. Some day I'll stay home and give her a good time."

* * *

GROWING FAST.

A very small boy was taken to a dental establishment to have some of his first teeth pulled. For a second or so, during which time four teeth disappeared, everything was fairly serene, and then came howls of objections.

"I didn't want them teeth to come out!" cried the young patient, suddenly recollecting something. "I want them to stay in."

"That's all right," consolingly responded the dentist. "They will soon grow in again."

"Will they?" quickly rejoined the boy, with a brightening face. "Do you think they will grow in time for dinner?"

* * *

THE GARDENER.

"Move away, ugly thing!"
Said the Lily so fair
To the toad that sat blinking close by.
"Folk so common as you
Are a nuisance, so there;
Move away, you're offending my eye!"

"I'm a knight in my right,
Haughty Lily so fair,
I am watching that knave on your boots;
For such beauty as yours
Is a care, I declare."
And he gobbled the worm at her roots.
—Our Dumb Animals.

* * *

DIFFERENT.

Hostess (at party)—"Does your mother allow you to have two pieces of pie when you are at home, Willie?"

Willie (who has asked for a second piece)—"No, ma'am."

"Well, do you think that she'd like you to have two pieces here?"

"Oh," confidently, "she wouldn't care. This is not her pie."

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Chicago Ledger

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READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

Too many fertile imaginations run to weeds.

The odds in favor of marriage are two to one.

Things that are better left unsaid are often overheard.

Wisdom is the name some men apply to their self-conceit.

Pessimists are men who go around looking for thorns to sit on.

Some men make a living by letting their wives keep boarders.

When two women get wound up, another is usually run down.

Some men brag about their wives as if they wanted to sell them.

Trouble is the most practical teacher in the school of experience.

Man wants but little here below, but he never gets quite enough.

You may judge a woman's character by the men she does not know.

Sometimes a woman's face overdoes it in the matter of telling her age.

When squashes get into the pie class they are considered some pumpkins.

Ignorance might be bliss if somebody did not think it his duty to put us wise.

Many things may be preserved in alcohol, but law and order are not on the list.

It is a good thing for some people that the necessities of life don't include brains.

A dime in your hand is better than a dollar in the pocket of the man who owes you.

No man with a full beard has to worry because of the neckties his good wife buys for him.

Cats, unlike politicians, give voice to the most decided utterances while on the fence in the dark.

Love sometimes flies out of the kitchen window when the cooking school graduate enters the door.

Gold brick buyers are born often enough to keep the manufacturers from going out of business.

If a girl says "No" three times in succession it's a hopeless case—unless she should change her mind.

The average woman will jump at the sight of a mouse almost as quickly as she will at an offer of marriage.

Don't try to guess a woman's age. Take it for granted that she is somewhat older than she thinks she looks, and let it go at that.

The atmosphere of the home in which the wife puts on more airs than the husband can afford is never what it should be.

A woman should never propose, because one rejection would crush her pride, while a dozen rejections would only egg a man on.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

The old-fashioned fur collar, known as the shawl collar, possibly a bit exaggerated for this season, is used extensively for the finish of many of the suits that are sent to us from Paris.

The winter wraps are, almost without exception, practical and decorative. They are quite long, in fact as a rule they completely cover the dress. This is an excellent idea, for the most attractive toilets can be worn underneath these fur and fur-trimmed wraps.

For the woman in search of an unusual silk for her gown or a distinctive lining for her handsome winter coat (and linings are important this season) there are new pussy willow taffetas which will just serve the purpose. The designs are queer and Oriental—delightfully unusual. The colorings are delightful. And as the silks are forty inches wide they will cut to advantage.

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Bread crumbs should always be used for covering articles for frying, as cracker crumbs absorb the grease.

Few housewives know what cheap and delicious pies may be made from grape juice sweetened and thickened with cornstarch.

To keep powdered sugar from hardening get only twenty-five cents' worth at a time, put in a paraffin-lined oatmeal carton, put two thicknesses of paraffin paper on the top, press the lid down firmly.

Fasten a piece of tape or string to the end of your scrubbing brush, so that when finished with it can be hung up and allowed to drain, instead of the water soaking into the back and loosening the bristles and making them soft.

A most refreshing and nourishing drink is made from half a glass of sour cream, half a glass of rich milk and a pinch of salt. Beat together with an egg beater until light and smooth. Pour into a tall glass, over the top put a thin coating of pulverized nut meats, and over this a scant grating of nutmeg. Served cold with a couple of crackers, this makes an appetizing light luncheon.

RECIPES.

OYSTER RISSOLES—Have ready two dozen oysters and some good puff paste. Roll out the latter very thin, and cut out in rounds with a biscuit cutter. In the center of each lay an oyster, folding the paste around it, and crimping the edges together. Dip each rissole in beaten egg, roll in bread crumbs and fry in very hot fat to a light golden brown. Garnish with parsley.

COD EN CASSEROLE—Take a one and a half pound slice of cod (enough for four or five people). Remove the skin. Place it in a casserole of ample size and pour in half a pint of boiling stock. Cover and bring to the boil again and then cook gently for about one hour and thirty minutes. Strain off the stock, add a quarter of a pint of stewed and sieved Spanish onion and tomato mixed, salt, pepper, a pinch of sugar and a dust of cayenne. Make hot, stir well, pour over the fish and serve.

POTATO DUMPLINGS—Mash about one pound of cooked potatoes or else pass them thru a sieve. Put the mashed potato in a basin, add two ounces of melted butter and the yolk of an egg, three ounces of whole meal flour, season to taste with salt, pepper and nutmeg and work all into a smooth paste. Whisk up stiffly the white of an egg and mix lightly with the above. Shape into balls by the aid of a little white or whole meal flour and cook in fast-boiling, salted water for about fifteen minutes, then take up, drain and serve with tomato sauce. These balls, if made very small, may either be served in soups or as a garnish with a roast or stew. When cold they can be egged, bread-crumbed and fried in vegetable fat, butter or oil.

HEALTH NOTES.

To treat frostbites rub part affected with ice or snow, or immerse in ice water. Later saturate cloth with warm water or alcohol and rub parts.

Lemons are supposed to be good for the liver. One should not partake of lemonade too strong or too regularly. Unsweetened lemonade is more wholesome than the sweetened kind.

A crushed finger should be plunged into water as hot as can possibly be borne. The application of hot water causes the nail to expand and soften, and the blood pouring out beneath it has more room to flow; thus the pain is lessened. The finger should then be wrapped in a bread-and-water poultice. A jammed finger should never be neglected.

When red hands refuse to yield to conscientious external applications you may be sure the cause of the trouble is not with the skin, but has its beginning in some such internal disorder as indigestion or defective circulation. Unmistakable warning is always given when the blood is sluggish. Hands and feet have that occasioned by the slightest pressure on the blood vessels or the least bit of inactivity. A good tonic will sometimes correct the trouble by enriching and giving substance to the blood, but the best, and, in fact, the only absolutely reliable remedy is that bane of the luxurious woman's existence—exercise.

NEEDLEWORK NOTES.

Boudoir caps are good gifts for young girls. A new embroidered sort is made in the style of a Dutch cap, with the embroidery in Delft blue or in black, on a sheer white muslin ground.

Make your own ironing-board covers from two thicknesses of old sheets. Stitch them up on the machine like a bag, turn it inside out, overcasting the open end. Attach tapes and tie in place on the board.

WANTED WORK.

"Well, what do you want?" said the master of the house sternly to Dreary Samuel, the tattered tramp, as he stood outside the door, shivering with the most accomplished art.

"I'm looking for work," replied he of the unemployed brigade. "Ain't you got no scrubbin' or washin' or cleanin' or nothin' that an honest boy could do?"

This earnest appeal for work made the householder think that he had misjudged a real, honest laborer out of work.

"Ah," he said, "now you speak like a man. I like to hear of any one willing to make an effort. I never thought you wanted work of that kind."

"No more I do," whined Samuel, shuddering at the bare idea "It's work for my wife that I'm a-lookin' for."

GIVING FATHER AWAY.

Little Willie came to his mother with the following query:

"Mother, what would you do if some one broke the large vase in the parlor?"

"I would whip him," responded mother.

After a few seconds elapsed, Willie, with a broad grin, said:

"Well, you'd better get ready. Papa broke it."

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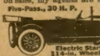

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Five-Pass., 30 H. P. 32x3½ tires

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BEAUTY and HEALTH are IMPOSSIBLE WITH FAT

FAT is FATAL

To Both, Over-Fatness may Shorten Life, Cause Heart Failure, Loss of Vigor, Kidney and Stomach Troubles, It Frequently Spoils Figure, is Uncomfortable, Unsightly, Burdensome

Proof Treatment FREE

Let me send you my PROOF TREATMENT absolutely FREE; I Have Safely Reduced Many of Excess Fat, Some a Pound a Day.

Note what the treatment I offer has done for others; would you like similar benefit?

Lost 83 pounds—Mrs. David Shantz writes: I have gotten rid of 83 pounds and all my rheumatism which has bothered me for many years. I had much bother with my arms and hands. I would have to get up at night and walk the floor. This is changed now. I sleep all night. I feel like a new woman, although I am 61 years old.

Your method a wonder—Mrs. Bert Kipp writes: I have reduced from 210 pounds to 150 pounds and am losing flesh every day. I have reduced my hip measure 12 inches and my bust 8 inches. I can walk five miles any day and am not tired. I tried a number of other treatments, but they all failed to help.

Lost 60 pounds—Mrs. Sarah Barnes writes: When I began your treatment for obesity I weighed 215 pounds, bust 46 inches, waist 39 inches, abdomen 55 inches. I am happy and proud that today I can say that I weigh but 155 pounds, bust 38 inches, waist 30 inches and abdomen 40 inches. I am in much better health than for years.

Better in every way—Mrs. Sarah Powers writes: I am better in every way. I have lost 55 pounds. I cannot praise the treatment enough.

Reduced over 1 pound a day—Mrs. Tom Williams writes: As long as I took your remedy I reduced over 1 pound a day as an average. Shall be glad to tell anyone that you refer to me of the benefit I received from your treatment.

Full testimonials, from which above extracts were taken (with addresses), also many others will be sent you.

Excess fat tends to weaken the heart. The liver, stomach and kidneys may become diseased; breathing is difficult, blood frequently impure and congested, and the end may come in Sudden Death by HEART FAILURE, APOPLEXY, or other disorder. You should save yourself from these DANGERS; *do not delay!*

You want clear skin, bright eyes, good figure, vivacity, true vigor and contentment.

Let me prove to you what my treatment is prepared to do, no matter where the excess fat is located, stomach, bust, hips, cheeks, neck, double chin; it has **healthfully, quickly**, safely, lastingly reduced without exercise or dieting, in legions of cases; *why not you?*

Rheumatism, asthma, shortness of breath, kidney and heart troubles, female ailments, nervousness, often reported relieved as fat goes away. I send you PROOF TREATMENT FREE. It is aimed to make you feel better at once. I also send you Free a book of advice, and testimonials from many well satisfied people.

FREE

Write me to-day.

F. THOMPSON BROUGH, M. D. 2142 Brough Bldg., East 22d St., New York

NOTE—Dr. Brough is a practicing physician, licensed and registered by State of New York; famous as a specialist in reducing fat and improving health by scientific home treatment.

DRAWBACKS.

"Dear me!" cried the best girl friend as she watched Julia try on the new hat that had just arrived. "Seems to me we are getting a lot of new clothes this season. I thought you were being economical."

"I was," Julia replied. "But I've had to give it up."

"That sounds queer," laughed the friend. "I wish somebody would force me to be extravagant."

"I'm not being extravagant," Julia explained. "I simply have to have new things, because it is cheaper in the end. You see, I can't afford to buy anything but the plainest, whereas if I fix things over I can use heirloom lace and brocades and make things look too handsome."

"Go on and tell me all about it," said the friend, encouragingly.

"We have some things that belonged to aunts and grandmothers," Julia explained. "And some of the things are really rather nice. You see, our branch of the family is the only one that isn't well off."

"Hard luck! Maybe wealth is coming to you yet."

"I doubt it. Anyhow, the things are there and I had a sudden inspiration last spring. Why should those things stay up there collecting moths and falling to pieces? I laid aside a lot of them to be fixed over this fall, but I found a lovely squirrel-lined coat that I wanted right away.

"It happened that I was invited to a lot of things in March," Julia went on. "The coat, of course, couldn't be used as it was and I couldn't use anything I had to help out with, so I ripped out the fur and made a dressy set of furs for myself."

"You clever girl!"

"I found the furrier would charge a small fortune even to look at the fur, so I decided to do the work myself. I went down to the stores and studied dress furs and then bought a little white satin and cord. I had some wool wadding that I could use, so that came in handy."

"Wasn't it an awful job?"

"Oh, not so bad. It hurt my fingers, but I didn't care when I found I had a big muff, a long wide throw and a little piece besides. It was a great convenience, because with a fine piece of fur I looked dressed up even when my gown was so inexpensive. But then my troubles began."

"Didn't it wear?"

"Oh, it wore all right. But it cost me a good deal. I had it on for the first time when Mrs. Hoppet came flying up to me and almost demanded a subscription for the Old Folks' Home. I gave her something, because she so pointedly admired my furs that I didn't dare refuse. I did decline to contribute to one of Miss Dobbins' pet charities, but I heard her speak afterward of selfish women who would put $200 into furs and give nothing to the poor."

"Nobody minds Miss Dobbins."

"Well, but that isn't the worst of it," Julia moaned. "My dentist bill is ten dollars more than I feared it could be and I know it is only because the dentist's wife saw me at the musicale with those furs on. My milliner last April wouldn't make me a cheap hat, remarking that I could afford the best, and I remembered that she saw me on the car wearing those furs.

"All summer I have been besieged by my friends to enter classes and subscribe for everything under the sun, and when I say I can't afford it they smile and say that, of course, it is just a question where one wishes to put one's money. This fall, when I resigned from the women's club because they raised the dues, somebody laughingly called me stingy. It has grown so bad that I hate to meet anybody I know who has any possible dealings with clubs or charities. I was getting everybody angry at me."

"Mrs. Drake asked me if your grandfather had left you a lot of money," laughed the caller. "She said she supposed that must be where you got it."

"There, you see," sighed Julia. "Now, this winter nobody will have a word to say. What I have is new and as simple as possible. This hat is pretty, you see, but guess what I paid for it? Not a cent more than three dollars over at a neighboring store!"

"Why," cried her friend. "I would have said that it cost at least twenty-five dollars."

Julia sank into a chair and moaned: "Oh, goodness me! How can one look economical?"

* * *

The Boy Skipper.

(Continued From Page 19.)

chuckled the queer youth, as he glanced at Phil from under one corner of his smoked glasses. There was a peculiar gleam in that glance, half-humorous, half-quizzical.

"You are quite right there," declared the boy skipper. "Will you come home with me? I think you said you knew my father."

"Did I? All a mistake, boy. Forget it. No, I have other business on hand just at present. Some one told me that his highness, David Stanley, is in town. Have you seen him?"

"Yes," smiled Phil. "I saw him two days ago."

"Perhaps he has quit town by now."

"I'm not sure. I haven't seen him today. There was a little unpleasantness between him and me, and I reckon he don't care to encounter me again right away."

"Well, well! I opine that he was surprised to see his young friend, safe and sound, after the report of your drowning?"

"I don't think he was very much pleased," laughed Phil. "On the contrary, he roared at me like a mad bull. In fact, he became so obstreperous I was obliged to hale him before a magistrate and have him fined."

"You don't tell me? Let's hear all about it, Philip, my lad."

Our boy hero was learning to like the lavender youth, and he told him of his encounter with the millionaire mine king, sparing nothing of the humiliation that the big man seemed to suffer.

Lean Jibb Selkirk whistled as he walked away. The fellow seemed to be following wherever Phil went, and also seemed to be anxious not to lose sight of the Ironport king of copper. Strange youth, indeed!

Phil wandered over to the depot to see a friend, and arrived just in time to see the train for the North pulling out. On the rear platform stood a burly figure which the young skipper recognized easily.

Shaking a clinched hand at Phil, the copper magnate cried:

"I'll get you yet, you young Satan!"

Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of this interesting story. You will miss a great treat if you do not read it to the end. We will give you constantly the very best stories of entertainment that money will buy, so send in your subscription and take the Ledger regularly, if you are not doing so. You will not regret it.

* * *

Even Chances.

A traveler was standing on the quay looking at a Mississippi boat and accosted one of the deck hands who was leisurely smoking a pipe, and inquired:

"Say, boss, is this boat going up or down?"

"Well," said the man, speaking slowly and as if considering the subject in all its aspects: "She's all-fired leaky, and her b'ilers ain't none too good, so I guess it's about even chances, if you're taking a bet on it."

* * *

His Opinion.

At a social tea at which Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was present the hostess, who had put the cream of her acquaintance on parade and quite expected and looked for effusive admiration from the great man, said to him as he was about to leave:

"Well, Doctor, what do you think of afternoon tea?"

He replied in these four strikingly graphic words:

"It is giggle—gabble—gobble—git!"

Took the Risk.

"Surely you are rather young to be left in charge of a drug store?" said a stout lady sternly as she eyed the youth behind the counter.

"Perhaps," was the careful reply. "But what can I do for you?"

"Doesn't your employer know how dangerous it is to put a mere boy in charge of such a place?" she went on.

"I am competent to serve you, madam," said the assistant, coldly.

"Don't you know you might poison somebody?" persisted the stout woman.

"There is no danger of that, madam," retorted the youth. "But what can I do for you?"

"Perhaps I'd better go to the druggist farther along the street," said the customer, turning toward the door.

"I can serve you as well as they can, and as cheaply," the youth informed her, eagerly.

"Well, then," said the woman, eying him thoughtfully, "I'll take three cakes of toilet soap."

* * *

A Reminder.

A Brooklyn minister gave a most scathing discourse on the evil effects produced by bad example, and exhorted all good members of his congregation not to countenance by their presence such a place of iniquity as Coney Island. At this one of the church wardens, in evident excitement, snapped his fingers.

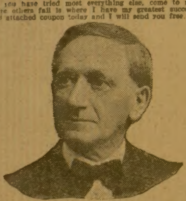
At the close of the service a member accosted the church warden and said:

"How was that for a sermon?"

"Great! I hope it will bear fruit," was the reply.

"What did you snap your fingers for?"

"Why, it reminded me that's the place where I left my umbrella."



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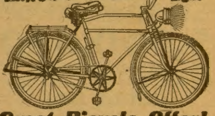

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There's a Girl in the Heart
of Maryland; Twilight
Are You From Dixie?
When I Was a Dreamer
Tulip Time in Holland
When You Wore a Tulip
When You're a Long Way
From Home; Silver Bell
Choo Choo Leaves for Alabam'
Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now
Call Me Some Rainy Afternoon
Alexander's Ragtime Band
When We Were Two Little Boys
When I Get You Alone Tonight
Waiting for the Robert E. Lee
Trail of the Lonesome Pine
Let Me Call You Sweetheart
Will the Angels Let Me Play?
Roses Bring Dreams of You
Great Big Blue Eyed Baby
Silver Threads Among the Gold
California and You
When I Lost You
Sweetheart Days
On Moonlight Bay
Ragtime Violin
My Hula Hula Love
On Mobile Bay
Stop, Stop, Stop
Just Next Door
Oh Mr. Dream Man
Mysterious Rag
Oh You Little Bear
Old Maid's Ball
Cubanola Glide
Memories
I'm the Guy
Grizzly Bear
Rainbow
Red Wing
Hiawatha
Oh You Kid
My Pony Boy
School Days
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148,678 LONE SCOUTS

In 64 Weeks, 148,678 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

MEMBERSHIP BADGE
FIRST DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)
SECOND DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)
THIRD DEGREE BADGE (Silver)

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected Chief Totem. The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization world-wide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: "Do a Useful Thing Each Day." Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 3 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP L
CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.
Date 1917
I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.
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Town .... State ....
St. No., P. O., or R. F. D. ....

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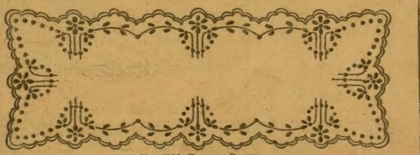

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We are checking over the sets of answers just as rapidly as possible, and we hope before many weeks have passed to announce the winning titles. There were many thousands of sets received, and in order to be sure that no errors occur, each set is carefully gone over.

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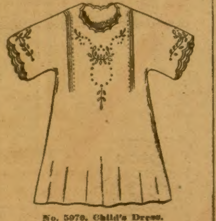
Watch this Magazine each week for details of how the checking is progressing.

THE FARMING BUSINESS,
500 N. Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.



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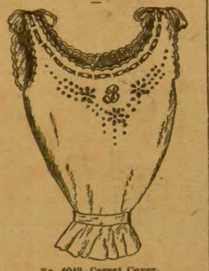
NO. 5070, CHILD'S DRESS—Beautifully designed and stamped on 1½ yards of white lawn or nainsook. We include three skeins of cotton floss for embroidering design. Sent with one year's subscription, new or renewal, to the Blade and the Ledger for $1.50.



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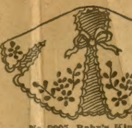

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* * *

Obliging.

Dean Hole of Rochester, England, tells of an innocent and obliging curate who went to a Yorkshire parish where many of the parishioners bred horses and sometimes raced them. A few Sundays after his arrival he was asked to invite the prayers of the congregation for Lucy Gray. He did so. They prayed for three Sundays for her. On the fourth the church clerk told the curate that he need not do it any more.

"Why?" he asked; "is she dead?"

"No," said the clerk, "she's won the steeplechase."

The curate became quite a power in the parish.

* * *

Good Advice.

"My soul is filled with poetry," said the temperamental young woman.

"Keep it there, my dear," answered the fatherly old gentleman, "and be happy. Don't get the idea, because there are so many magazines published in this country, that you ough to share the poetry of your soul with the low-browed reading public."

PATTERN COUPONS FREE!

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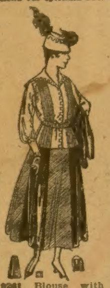
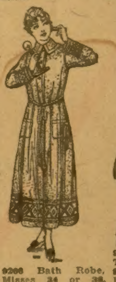
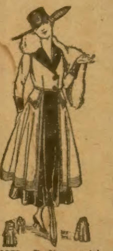
We have a splendid offer of the best and most fashionable patterns that can be produced by the greatest designers of New York and Paris, and what is more, these patterns will be within the reach of every one, and every one will have a wide selection to choose from. Read our splendid offer below.



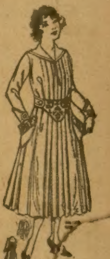
9261 Blouse with Yoke, 34 to 42 bust. 9264 Eight-Gored Skirt 24 to 34 waist.



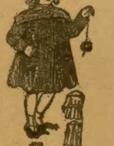
9266 Bath Robe, Misses 34 or 36, Women 36 or 38, 40 or 42, 44 or 46 bust.



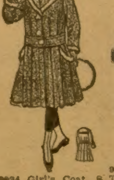
9273 Bodice with Tunic, 34 to 42 bust. 9211 Skirt with Pockets, 24 to 34 waist.



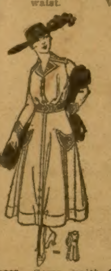
9309 Plaited Dress for Misses and Small Women, 16 and 18 years.



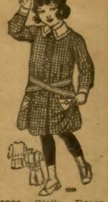
9263 Child's Coat, 2, 4 and 6 years.



9034 Girl's Coat, 8 to 14 years.



9262 Gown with Three-Piece Skirt, 34 to 44 bust.



9200 Girl's Dress with Bloomers, 2 to 8 years.

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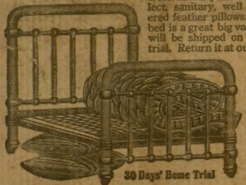

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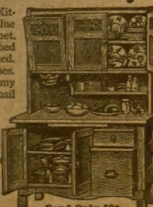
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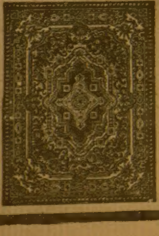

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